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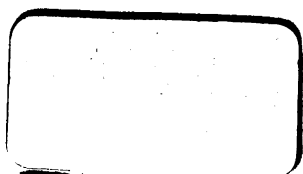
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PICTURES OF OLD ROME.

PICTURES OF OLD ROME.

By FRANCES ELLIOT,

Author of "The Diary of an Idle Woman in Italy."

NEW EDITION.

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NOTE.



THESE Pictures were written and published in Rome, where they were received with favour. They are now reprinted, with some modifications, additions, and (it may be hoped) improvements, for English readers.

FRANCES ELLIOT.

DEANERY, BRISTOL.





CONTENTS.

	PAGE
PIAZZA DEL POPOLO	I
ROMAN INTERIORS	21
THE PALATINE, THE REPUBLIC, AND AUGUSTUS	59
THE PALATINE AND THE EMPIRE	87
PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF THE CÆSARS	131
THE CAMPUS MARTIUS	147
CAMPUS MARTIUS UNDER JULIUS CÆSAR	172
THE VIA TRIUMPHALIS	195
THE MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS	217
THE CÆLIAN HILL	237
SAN GREGORIO	255
THE CATACOMBS	275
ST. PETER'S	296



PICTURES OF OLD ROME.

PIAZZA DEL POPOLO.

THE Piazza del Popolo realizes all our poetic visions of Rome. It opens out with such magnificence, a mysterious Obelisk browened by unnumbered centuries in the centre, flashing fountains and dark groves around, while above, towers the Pincian—the hill of Gardens. How majestically that hill rises aloft—shaded by cypress and ilex woods, and broken by sumptuous porticos, descending terraces, rich balustrades, graceful statues, stately trophies; a scene such as the imagination of a poet might call forth in a delicious day dream! Beautiful Pincian! crowned with leafy groves, and wreathed with flowers, I love thee well, for on thy classic outline my eye first rested on entering Rome!

Those twin churches, too, that salute the traveller as he traverses the Piazza, with such a gracious and appro-

R

priate welcome, I greet ye, as ye first greeted me. And those splendid palaces bordering the fair space ; and that triple vista, the *Babuino*, the *Corso*, the *Ripetta*, which seem to cleave the city in long drawn lines, leading away the mind to the solemn ruins of far-off times, and beckoning the stranger onwards with such fascination ; oh ! take from me a greeting, for ye became to me a second and a spiritual home.

What mighty shadows rise before me as I invoke the shadows of the past, standing beside the fountains ! What endless recollections ! Through that gate came Constantine, fresh from the fight of the *Pons Milvius*, which fixed the destinies of Christianity, his helmet wreathed with laurel, the sacred Labarum bearing the mysterious symbol, carried before him. As that symbol passed the Roman gate, the pagan altars trembled, the vast temples shook to their foundations, for the demons knew that their fall was at hand, and that Christianity had conquered !

And in the far-off time, when the savage Gauls tempted by the luscious grapes, and the blue skies of Italy, came rushing down from the north like swarms of locusts from the Etruscan mountains, over the broad Campagna, it was here they passed on to the Forum, where the senators, clothed in their purple togas, sitting immovable

before the stately temples in their curule chairs, seemed to them as gods !

The Emperor Galba, too, entered Rome this way coming from the Milvian bridge, where a massacre had already drowned his laurels in blood. Galba passed triumphantly along, attended by his Spanish and Gaulish Legions, little dreaming, the indolent old man, of the fearful death awaiting him ere a few days were past in the Forum, beside the *milliarium aureum* near the lake of Curtius, where the prætorian guards, corrupted by Otho, cruelly massacred this unarmed and feeble Emperor.

Vitellius also, coming out of Gaul advanced from the Milvian bridge through the Flaminian Gate, mounted on a white charger, while the senate and the people pressed on before to make way for the new Cæsar. He was followed by his troops, a stately procession of many nations, whose glittering arms, and rich apparel, called forth the admiration of the multitude. Beside the eagles walked the prefects of the camp, the tribunes and centurions arrayed in white, presenting a spectacle, says Tacitus, worthy of a better emperor. But that brilliant triumph was fated after a few months, to end in a miserable death. Vespasian was approaching rapidly from the East, and battle after battle was lost by the

Vitellians. At length when Vespasian had encamped under the walls of Rome, beside the Milvian bridge, Vitellius, utterly forsaken, took refuge in an obscure chamber of the imperial palace, on the Palatine, but quickly discovered, he was dragged along amidst the scoffs and insults of the rabble towards the very stone in the Forum where a few months before Galba had perished. There he was told to look around to behold his fallen statues, and to remember Galba. "And yet," replied the miserable old man, "I have been your sovereign!" No matter, he was hurried on to the Gemoniæ, the charnel of the malefactors, and there dispatched. It would seem as if some evil genius had attended every Emperor that entered Rome this way.

The space of open ground now occupied by the Piazza was formerly comprised within the vast expanse of the Campus Martius; the grassy plains undulating towards the river, whose yellow waters bathed its verdant banks. Part of the Piazza, or at least the ground immediately adjoining that surrounded the Augustan mausoleum, was laid out in funereal gardens, planted with sombre groves, intersected by broad walks and magnificent terraces, over which cypress and ilex woods flung down deep shadows. These woods were sown with

white monuments peeping through the dark branches. Here stood the sepulchre of the great Sylla, and here were also situated the tombs of the freedmen and clients of the Emperors, even in death assembled and watching, as it were, around the stately tomb where rested the imperial dust. Fair and beautiful has been, in all ages, this vestibule to the eternal city!

That obelisk, too, standing in the centre of the Piazza, and surmounting the fountains, how rich in memories! It stands nearly 100 feet high, and is formed of red granite, and although broken in three places, the hieroglyphics on its sides are still legible. Erected by one of two brothers Maudouci and Susirei, who reigned in Egypt before Rhamses the Second, to adorn the temple of the Sun at Heliopolis the On of scripture, Augustus transported it to Rome after the battle of Actium, which, followed as it was by the death of Antony and Cleopatra, ensured the entire conquest of Egypt. This graceful monument of a despoiled land was first erected in the *Circus Maximus*, but as early as the reign of Valentinian, it had fallen from its pedestal, and lay buried in the earth. Sixtus V., that patriotic Pope, who, having once *found* the keys of St. Peter, which he is said figuratively ever to have sought, with his eyes fixed on the ground, *held* them so vigorously when once his own,

removed it in the sixteenth century to its present site, consecrating the Pagan emblem to the cross. The obelisk tells its own tale. On one side, in worn and ancient letters, is engraven, "The Emperor Cæsar, son of the divine Cæsar Augustus, sovereign Pontiff, twelve times Emperor, eleven times Consul, fourteen times Tribune, having conquered Egypt, consecrated this gift to the Sun." On the other side is inscribed, "Sixtus V., sovereign Pontiff, excavated, transported and restored this obelisk, sacrilegiously consecrated by Augustus to the Sun in the great Circus, where it lay in ruins, and dedicated it to the cross triumphant in the fourth year of his pontificate." Then, in allusion to the church dedicated to the *Madonna* of the People, standing beside the Flaminian gate, follow these words, "Sanctified and glorious I rise before the sanctuary of Her, whose virgin bosom bore the Sun of righteousness, (sol justitiæ) under the reign of Augustus."

That church dedicated to "Mary of the People," built as it were into the very walls of Rome, which rise frowningly behind it overshadowed by the Pincian woods, with its façade looking out so smilingly on the Piazza, must not be forgotten.

On the spot where stands that church, once a lonely shrubbery lying between the luxuriant groves embosom-

ing the Augustan monument, and the *Collis Hortulorum*, (belonging to the Domitian family,) rose the ruins of Nero's tomb.

When the execration of the people, and the danger of instant death, had aroused Nero to a consciousness of the desperate state of his affairs, he looked around, says Tacitus, for assistance, but he looked in vain. He put away his lute, and wandered through the desolate halls of his palace, but all was solitary—already had his courtiers forsaken him to welcome Galba. Conscience began to exercise her rights, and Nero, the murderer of his brother, his mother, and his wife, now contemplated his crimes with horror; the avenging Furies already claimed him as their own, horrible dreams disordered his broken slumbers, and that ominous verse of *Œdipus*, which he had so often repeated when acting on the public stage, haunted him like a curse. “My wife, my father, and my mother, doom me dead.” Portents and presages were not wanting. The Lares fell from their pedestals, the gates of the Augustan Mausoleum opened of themselves, and a voice was heard from within calling on his name. It was in vain that he tore up the letters which were presented to him, containing the details of the Gallic insurrection, that he proposed singing to the lute in the Forum his own misfortunes, in order to excite

the sympathy of the Senate, by the sound of his divine voice. A deadly and terrible war was inevitable, the effeminate Nero must fight, or he must die, yet he is incapable of arming himself courageously against either event. With characteristic frivolity he employs his leisure over an hydraulic organ which he has invented, he promises the Gods magnificent games if he lives, "the organ shall be then played for the first time, he himself will perform to their honour on the flute, and afterwards will dance in the Ballet of Turnus." When he must leave Rome to encounter the enemy, and arrives in the revolted provinces, "he will," he says, "show himself unarmed to the rebels: without speaking a word he will sit down and weep; their hearts will be touched, the Legions will sing hymns in his honour, and all will be forgotten!" The whole world had become a melodrama to this infatuated comedian.

But Galba advances, province after province declare in his favour; he is approaching the imperial city, he is at hand. When Nero hears this, he starts from the couch where he is reposing, flings to the ground two favourite crystal cups, summons Locusta with her poisons, and gives himself over to cowardly despair. A thousand different projects rush through his brain. He will fly to the East, and carrying with him his Lyre,

sing at Alexandria. "Every country is a home for the artist," he says. "He will seek an asylum in Parthia, he will show himself to the Senate in a mourning garb, he will fling himself at the feet of Galba." Such are his incoherent ravings, but no one listens to him, and the pretorian guards sternly refuse to leave the city. Even Tigellinus has abandoned him; no helping hand, no friendly voice is there to soothe him. The courtiers have all fled, his very bed he finds has been pillaged in his absence. Driven to distraction, he cries out in wild accents for an executioner—for the gladiator Spiculus. But no one answers. "My friends desert me," he cries, "and I cannot find an enemy." Armed with poison, he rushes to the Servilian gardens, but his dastardly nature is incapable of ending his miserable life with dignity. He looks around despairingly, and can only exclaim—"What an artist will be lost to the world!" then turning to the few followers who still linger around him, he asks—"If there be no lurking place, no safe retreat, where he might retire to consider his situation?"

Phaon, his freedman, proposes conducting him to an obscure villa he possessed, between the Salarian and the Nomentan ways. Nero accepts the offer, and goes forth in all his wretchedness, without shoes, in a close tunic, without even a mantle, with a handkerchief

fastened over his face. As he and his attendants pass along, they are assailed with questions. "What do they say of Nero at Rome?" says one. "Look," cries another, "those men seek Nero." The Emperor's horse, starting at a dead body lying in the road, caused the handkerchief to fall from his face, when a veteran soldier, who was passing, recognises, and salutes him. This misadventure increases Nero's fears; he hurries forward, and when arrived near the villa dismounts from his horse, and enters the grounds by a side-path, covered with briars and thorns. His unsaddled feet are torn as he passes. Phaon advises him to conceal himself in a sand-pit, until he could open a subterraneous passage into the house; but Nero, perhaps dreading treachery, refuses. "For," says he, "that would be burying myself alive." Then he scooped up some dirty water in his hand, exclaiming, in a doleful voice, "Is this then the only drink for Nero?"

An opening being made in the wall, he creeps into a wretched chamber, and the master of the Golden House, the man who had squandered countless millions, was fain to throw himself upon an old mattress, on a miserable bed, covered with a dirty counterpane. He asked for food, but turns with disgust from the black bread and foul water presented to him. His friends,

disgusted at his pusillanimity, urge him by one bold blow to end the struggle : he assents, but still lingers under various pretences. A trench was to be dug for his grave, wood was to be collected, fragments of marble were to be laid, water was to be brought for performing the last duties to his remains, each minutia was recollected to eke out his last moments. Finally, when all had been prepared according to his wish, he draws forth two daggers, examines their points, and then returns them to the scabbard. "The fatal moment has not yet come," said he ; "sing the melancholy dirge and celebrate my last obsequies." He looks around, and, with his usual brutal selfishness and disregard of human life, ("the ruling passion strong in death,") exclaims, "Why, why will not some one kill himself, and teach me how to die ?" Then starting up, in a tone of wild despair he added, "Nero ! this is infamy, you linger in disgrace ; this is no time for cowardice ; the moment calls for manly fortitude."

These words were no sooner uttered, than the sound of approaching horses was heard ; the officer charged by the Senate with the order for his execution approaches. Nero seizes his dagger, and deals a feeble blow. Epaphroditus, his secretary, came to his assistance, and inflicted a mortal wound. When the

centurion entered the room, Nero faintly exclaims, "You come too late." As he spoke he expired, his ferocious soul still imaged in his countenance causing him to look more horrible than ever. Icelus, the freed-man of Galba, who came to verify his death, suffered his attendants to burn the body where it lay in the grave he himself had measured out. But he was not interred here, "for" says Suetonius, "having wrapped his remains in a rich white stuff, embroidered with gold, his nurses Eclaga and Alexandra, with Acte his concubine, deposited them in the Domitian monument, which is seen from the Campus Martius, under the hill of Gardens. The tomb was of porphyry, having an altar of Luna marble surrounded by a balustrade of Thaos marble."

On the spot where rested the ashes of the imperial matricide, grew, in after times, a gigantic walnut tree, whose thick and shady branches became the haunt of innumerable crows, which laid waste all that part of Rome. The assistance of the Virgin being invoked, according to the legend, she appeared to Pope Pascal II., and telling him that the crows were demons that kept watch over the ashes of Nero, ordered him to cut down the ominous tree, (*albero malnato*, as it is called) to burn it, and scatter the ashes in the air; then to erect on

that spot a church in her honour. The command was literally accomplished, and the heavenly mother is now invoked on the spot where once rested all that was mortal of the infamous Nero.

The church was raised by public collection, hence its name. Over the door is a miraculous image of the Virgin, bearing the inscription, "*Tu honorificentia populi nostri*," placed here by Gregory IX. The image is said to have been successfully invoked by Gregory XIII. on occasion of a terrible plague at Rome, in the year 1578.

There is much solemn beauty in the interior of this church, and the utmost reverence is observable in the crowds of the poorer classes who at all hours of the day come here to offer up their prayers. Pinturicchio's paintings and frescoes, the graceful sculptures on the tombs, the beautiful statue of Jonah, designed and executed by Raphael, the fine painted glass windows, the various monuments, and rich chapels, make it altogether one of the most artistically interesting churches in Rome. Bernini's hand has been too busy here, as elsewhere, but much remains that is venerable and ancient.

Attached to the church is a convent of Augustan Friars. This was pillaged and destroyed when Rome was sacked, during the pontificate of Clement VII., by the army of

Charles V. The Duke of Alva saved the church with difficulty. Before the convent was destroyed Luther inhabited it during his stay in Rome, and here he offered up the host for the last time. When Christina Queen of Sweden, the eccentric daughter of Gustavus Adolphus, made her public entry into Rome, it was within these walls the cardinals and magnates assembled to receive her.

To those unlearned in classical annals, it may add a fresh interest to the Piazza del Popolo, to know that here Sylla was interred. Plutarch tells us that his tomb was in the Campus Martius of which this Piazza formed a portion, and immemorial tradition points out the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli as the spot. Some remains of his mausoleum were visible as late as the pontificate of Paul III., and were known by the name of *Theta*. They were destroyed to assist in the erection of two towers flanking the Flaminian Way, now incorporated into the modern gate of the Porta del Popolo.

Passing from the Piazza del Popolo, and its many and varied associations, towards the neighbouring Piazza di Spagna, it seemed strange to me that among the thousands who annually traverse that Saxon settlement, so few should remember that here was situated the celebrated Naumachia of Domitian, a Lake, according to

Suetonius, which he caused to be excavated surrounded by rows of seats, where naval battles were exhibited by entire fleets, a diversion in which he so much delighted, that even the most violent rain did not drive him away before the conclusion of the combat.

The steps, leading from the Piazza to the church of the Trinità, crowded with artistically grouped beggars, is as well known to all stranger-visitors as our own homes ; but few, perhaps, among the many that mount those steps under the genial sun of a Roman winter day, know, or remember that it was on the summit of the Pincian hill that the voluptuous gardens of Lucullus were situated.

Lucullus, having bravely fought the battles of the republic in Asia returned to Rome, where, after celebrating his triumph, he passed his time in voluptuous pleasures. "Indeed," says garrulous old Plutarch, "his life looks like an ancient comedy, where first we see great actions, both political and military, and afterwards feasts, debauches, races by torchlight, and every kind of frivolous amusement. For among frivolous amusements, I cannot but reckon his sumptuous villas, walks, and baths, and still more so, the paintings, statues, and other works of art, which he collected at an immense expense, idly squandering away upon them the vast fortune which he had amassed in the wars."

We are also told, by Plutarch, of his epicurean banquets. One day he met, in the Forum, Cicero and Pompey, who, seeing him disengaged, proposed dining with him ; Lucullus assented, and pressed them to come. "We will wait on you," said Cicero, "provided you give us nothing but what is prepared for yourself." Lucullus made some difficulty about this part of the arrangement ; but the others, knowing his extravagant habits, insisted. They even declared jocosely, that he should not be permitted to speak to his servants, save in their presence. After some laughing altercation, he was allowed to tell one of his attendants, "That he should sup in the hall of the Apollo that evening." Delighted at their manœuvre, they all arrived together at his house, when what could exceed their astonishment, at finding the most gorgeous of his halls dressed as for a festival, and a banquet prepared so rich and costly, that 50,000 drachms would not suffice to pay for it ! The mystery was explained in this way ; each of his halls had its particular allowance for provisions, plate, and furniture, so that the slaves, hearing which apartment he had selected, knew the expense he meant to incur, what side-boards and carpets they were to lay out, and what kind of entertainment he intended.

In the course of time, these gardens of Lucullus

became the property of Valerius Asiaticus. It was in the reign of Claudius, and Messalina rioted in wildest excesses as his Empress. Every one extolled the magnificence of the gardens, Valerius being an "*élégant*," little inferior in luxurious extravagance to Lucullus. Messalina, like another Jezebel, cast her eyes on the fair enclosure, it must become hers at any cost: like Naboth, Asiaticus must be removed; so he was arrested at Baia and led before Claudius. The Empress suborned Suilius to accuse him of corrupting the army, and living in a licentious manner. This latter charge was not happily imagined in the presence of Messalina, that high priestess of depravity. Asiaticus defended himself with pathetic eloquence, even the leaden Claudius was touched, and Messalina herself dropped a tear; but remembering the gardens, she quickly wiped it away, and left the room quite ashamed of her weakness, earnestly enjoining Vitellius her confidant, not to suffer the prisoner to escape. Those gardens were too tempting; she positively could not allow herself to be overcome. The only question was, how was Asiaticus to be dispatched? As an excessive favour he was permitted to choose his own way of dying. Messalina, by this act of clemency, had now quite satisfied all the requirements of her imperial conscience.

Asiaticus, however, knowing he must die, spoke boldly out. "He was indignant," he said, at "falling by the intrigues of an artful and abandoned woman." Messalina was very indifferent as to his sentiments on her conduct, but when she heard that he had opened his veins, and was dead, she was delighted.

Having thus compassed her purpose, she took possession of the gardens. Tempted by their exquisite beauty, the profligate Empress abandoned herself to those monstrous excesses that have made her name symbolical of all that is most repugnant in woman. Here the "divine Messalina," whose very shoes were kissed, and honoured by base sycophants, passed her hours in festivities. The season being autumn, she celebrated the bacchanalian festivities of the Brumalia, wine presses groaned, juice pressed from the grape flowed in copious streams, while around the vats, groups of Bacchantes, dressed in tiger-skins and wreathed with grapes, trod in frolic measures. In the midst of the revellers, Messalina, her hair flowing over her shoulders in artful negligence, and a thyrsus waving in her hand, led the dance. Some one, in the midst of these orgies, climbed up into a tree, and exclaimed, in mockery, "that he saw a dreadful storm gathering at Ostia."

Claudius was at Ostia. Little suspecting his dis-

honour, he spent his time in reforming the general licentiousness of Roman manners, adding fresh letters to the alphabet, and eating and drinking to excess. He was so engrossed by his enthusiasm for the morality of the masses, he had no time to look at home. Happy fool! Yet fool as he was, the truth was at length forced upon him. He returned to Rome. Messalina, now disgraced and forsaken by all her court save three attendants, declares she must see him, traverses the city on foot, and, finding no better conveyance than a cart used to carry away rubbish from the gardens, mounts on it, and sets forth to meet him. "Hear your unhappy wife," cries she—"hear the mother of your children."—Her entreaties are drowned by his reproaches. Narcissus, his freedman, her particular enemy, who is in the chariot along with Claudius, takes care that he shall not relent. As they enter Rome, their children approach to intercede for their unhappy mother. Narcissus orders them away. Vibidia, the eldest of the vestal virgins, presents herself before the Emperor, to entreat that he will not condemn the Empress unheard; but she is told, "It would be more suitable for her to mind the sacrifices and to retire." Messalina's fate was fixed, she herself saw she had overstepped the possibility of pardon, and that all was lost. She passed the whole night pre-

ceding her death on the summit of the Pincian, within those ill-fated gardens. Stretched on the ground, with her mother seated beside her, she awaited the fatal sentence. Lepida, with the courage of a Roman matron, urged her daughter to fall by her own hand ; but Messalina, steeped in luxury, was devoid of all moral courage. Like Nero, she asked for a poniard, yet she clung to life ; she looked around at the fair scene, and lamented her fate ; then, aiming a feeble blow at her throat, she shrunk back affrighted. At length a tribune appeared, and dispatched her with a single stroke, so her own blood ran out over the soil purchased by the blood of Asiaticus !

And it is on this spot that pure and lovely girls sing in the solemn church of the Trinità !—Every visitor to Rome admires their fresh young voices, when the Ave Maria is intoned. Strange and mysterious parallel, the abandoned Empress, whose name stands as a watchword for vice, and that holy sisterhood and those innocent virgins ! Such thrilling contrasts are not to be found out of Rome, where literally “ he who runs may read ” the most wondrous lessons.



ROMAN INTERIORS.

IN this chapter I propose giving some account of the social laws and domestic habits prevailing among the inhabitants of old Rome,—that world-Capital within whose ample walls the riches, honours, and learning of the whole earth were accumulated. “To see,” says Aristides, the rhetorician, “the fleets that fill her ports, one would imagine that she was the universal emporium of the globe, where the riches of Arabia, and of Babylon, are heaped up in such abundance, that those countries must be left bare. Not only her ports, but the ocean itself will not suffice to contain her navies,—commerce, navigation, and agriculture, meet here as the common centre of the world. What is not found within her walls, is unknown.”

It has been observed by a modern historian that, “In ancient times the entire power of a nation being centered in the capital, the state was the city, the country but the *ager* or field, the one the master, the other the slave.

Within the walls of Rome," he goes on to remark, "the civilized universe collected, and the more the Republic extended her foreign conquests the more heterogeneous became the mixture of people, customs, manners, and religion. The rich man came from the far-off provinces to live, the profligate to seek the favour and protection of still greater profligates, the Egyptian philosopher to display his curious learning, the priests of different nations to teach the worship of their Gods,—all pressed to Rome, all embracing everlasting Rome, the mother of the universe."

To be called a Roman citizen was a title which kings were proud to bear, for the citizens considered themselves the equals of kings. From the very earliest times the *plebs* or citizens are represented as a proud, riotous, unruly rabble, eternally combating for the passing of the agrarian law, and proclaiming loudly about what they called *liberty*, a liberty which was stigmatized as *license* by their opponents. There were innumerable advantages attending this much-prized Roman citizenship; it was by no means a mere name. The *plebs urbana* were fed with corn, and enjoyed the public distribution of money from each time-serving and ambitious consul, prætor, general, dictator, and Emperor; they were entertained with magnificent games, they bathed in marble palaces; the

Campus Martius supplied them with a noble field for exercise and diversion, answering to our modern parks,—the Circus and the Theatre amused their idle hours. In a word, they were part and parcel of the great Metropolis of the world, and the goods, riches, honours, and triumphs heaped upon her they shared.

The poor wretches, the *plebs rustica*, had a very different life ; whilst their brethren in the city rioted in luxury, they could scarcely keep body and soul together by the severest toil ; they hungered, whilst the others feasted *gratis*. They had no vote in the Forum, no arm to defend them, no voice to plead their wrongs ; they were the earliest and most signal victims of national strife, the first holocaust offered up by an invading army. Gracchus tried to better their condition, and lost his life in the attempt, a fate not likely to induce any other patriot to espouse their cause. So they dug, and delved, while their brothers wallowed in luxury. This unequal distribution of the law is strikingly apparent, and originated from the early privileges granted to the Quirites as citizens of Rome, and subjects of Romulus *par excellence*, whilst the inhabitants of the *ager*, and those of the neighbouring towns bordering the shore and on the adjacent mountains, were but Latins, and allies, immeasurably inferior in general estimation to the genuine

Roman, who, like the founder of his city, aspired to be considered something God-like, and heaven-descended.

It is natural that, before considering some of the antiquities of Rome, curiosity should be excited as to how these proud citizens lived in their homes, what laws restrained them, what manners distinguished them, what daily and hourly habits and customs prevailed. Amid the mighty ruins of the Baths, Circuses, Temples, and Forums which still remain, the question naturally arises, how did the men and women, who went in and out of these marble portals day by day, pass their time? How were they educated? How were they amused? How did they live in their domestic circles? A few remarks on ancient domestic life may not be inappropriate, or unacceptable, to those who have trod the same soil with these former masters of the universe.

In the early days of republican liberty, the power of a Roman father was absolute. He could, if he were so minded, expose his new-born infants on the sombre shore of the Velabrum Lake, or upon the island on the Tiber, where the shrine of Æsculapius stood. The law indeed *enjoined* a parent to make away with deformed children. At their birth each infant was placed at the father's feet. If he raised the little creature in his arms, it straightway became part of the family; if he turned away,

it was speedily borne off to die ; its cruel fate totally disregarded by the parent who gave it life. Afterwards, when this ill-omened Lake was filled up, and the island came to be inhabited, a touch of humanity seems to have crept into the savage ferocity of primitive manners, yet the *pater familias* still possessed the right of selling his children for slaves, and even of putting them to death. All about and within his house was his absolute and unalienable property, his *roba*, with which he might deal precisely as he chose, the law affording no appeal, no redress.

Domestic life, according to our endearing understanding of the phrase, was unknown among the Romans ; household sympathies and family ties under such barbarous and ferocious laws were obviously impossible. That mixture of desire, respect, and affection we designate as love was scarcely understood, consequently the instances of conjugal fidelity and domestic happiness were extremely rare. How could women love or be faithful to husbands they never selected ? And how could they select them, when the republican laws for women were quite analogous in point of lawless cruelty to those in respect to infants ? They were given in marriage as cattle are driven to the market, without the least regard to their affections or

their tastes, the political, or pecuniary, or personal interest of the *pater familias* being the only consideration that regulated these connections. In all the annals of Roman history we do not meet with one single instance of *une belle passion* ! The facility of divorce prevailing at all times in Rome was the only hope of these ill-used members, of the commonwealth. Joined to a disgusting or odious spouse to-day, the following month might see her celebrating the hymeneal festivities with a favoured lover. On the other hand, the wife who chanced to be attached to her husband might be remorselessly torn from his arms, to suit some futile whim, family interest, or state policy. Instances of this kind became innumerable as the sternness of republican manners gave place to the luxurious license of the Empire. Tiberius was severed from his beloved Agrippina to wed the profligate Julia, whom he abhorred, in order to cement a family compact, and strengthen, by matrimonial ties, his adoption by Augustus ; and his mother Livia, shortly before his birth, was violently torn from her husband, Tiberius Nero, to please the fancy of Augustus. From this system of forced marriages and facile divorces arose the monstrous domestic crimes of the later Romans—those incredible bed and board vices of which we read with incredulous astonishment. Love in its pure and

holy sense, as a union formed by mutual attachment and consecrated by religion, was almost unknown ; domestic happiness was an untaught mystery ; and morality and conjugal fidelity were regarded as contemptible weaknesses. The husband knew that at any moment, if it suited her schemes, the hand of his wife might mix the poison destined to destroy him ; and the wife was fully aware that, to gain the most insignificant step on the golden ladder of power, the husband of her youth, and the father of her children, would without ceremony cast her adrift, to obtain a richer, fairer, or nobler bride. It was impossible for women, under such a system, not to become utterly depraved.

The Pagan religion, too, with its obscene mysteries and abominable rites, early initiated women into the knowledge of every kind of horror, excited their passions, and destroyed each budding virtue of innocent maidenhood. Laws, habits, manners, religion, amusements, all combined to degrade and to debase the Roman matron, especially under the Empire. Everything around her breathed the same polluted atmosphere : the very walls of the houses—even the pottery, and the vases used for domestic purposes—were ornamented with frescoes and figures utterly repugnant to a virtuous mind. Vice had become a habit and a fashion. The theatres encouraged

every grosser feeling, and fed the general taste for savage excitement, the favourite spectacles consisting of subjects of all others most suited to corrupt, deprave, and harden the heart. In the circus and the amphitheatres blood flowed like water, and yet the greedy multitude called aloud for more, and sat there day and night as if nailed to the benches by the hideous fascination of the scene. Women, matrons, and maidens, seated on the upper benches, loudly applauded these sanguinary exhibitions; and the vestal virgins, enthroned on the podium beside the Emperor, rarely exercised their attribute of mercy in saving the combatants. If a cry of compassion arose from the multitude at the sight of the accumulated corpses, it was for the animals, not for the gladiators. History records nothing more shocking than the heartless cruelty displayed in the lives of these pompous Romans, both male and female, who, in their pride, deemed all other nations barbarians.

Few, very few of the women in the long annals of Roman history had the courage to rise superior to the evil example around them. We read but of *one* Cornelia, and *one* Lucretia, whereas Agrippinas, Messalinas, and Poppæas crowd the page.

Now let us see how the men were educated, those lords of the creation, who ever give the tone to general

manners. You may be sure that the *pater familias* provided a stern education for those sons he had condescended to accept, in order to train them up in his own footsteps. Morality, according to the ancient reading of the word, was patriotism ; and courage was virtue. The love of country was a religion, a worship. Rome—in its immaterial essence as the common centre of the Empire, the common home and hearth of the citizens, as well as in its actual development, with its walls, towers, buildings, streets, and forums—was a deity to which everything must be sacrificed. The worship of Jupiter Capitolinus would have been but a shadowy phantom, if the Romans had not associated with it the spot where the Temple stood, as the actual residence of Jupiter.

To the citizens were offered four different means of advancement—war, religion, law, and eloquence ; and all those professions were generally united in the education of every Roman. Almost every distinguished citizen was at some period of his life called on to command the legions. Few escaped a legal accusation from one amongst the innumerable informers that invested the Forum, and must be able suitably to defend himself, or, on his part to lay a charge against an enemy. Every general was called on to fulfil religious duties, and the

office of pontiff was one of the many rewards offered to distinguished merit or patriotism. Every citizen was expected to understand the laws of the land, and to be able to give a competent answer on any knotty point of legislation. Thus every distinguished Roman was educated so as to become a general, a lawyer, an orator, or a pontiff, as circumstances might arise: Cicero led armies, Julius Cæsar was an eloquent pleader, and Cato was both a statesman and a philosopher.

The cultivation of eloquence formed an important branch of education; every Roman seemed born with a natural talent for oratory, which was cultivated and improved to the utmost by instruction. The citizen spoke in the assembly of the people and in the Forum; a general harangued his troops, and occasionally favoured ambassadors from the enemy with a thundering oration. Not to be able to speak with the studied elocution of an orator, was scarcely to be a Roman. Nero learnt eloquence from Seneca; and it is recorded as something despicable of Augustus, that he was obliged to prepare his speeches. The out-door life of the people, fond of enjoying a delicious climate, was passed in the baths, the porticoes, the temples, the tribunes, the forums. The Romans had no home: they lived in public, as public men, and their education prepared them for this

career. Philosophy, poetry, rhetoric, and politics, were all listened to, and discussed in the open air.

The Forum was naturally the grand arena of the great and the ambitious; there the conscript fathers could harangue to their heart's content; even Tiberius, unsociable as he was, liked to come down, and listen to the discussions as a kind of sombre pastime. When no public matter of importance was under consideration, they talked, or a son was adopted, a will was made, or a wife divorced. The Forum was the ancient newspaper, the Roman *Times*, only instead of reading, the senators spoke, and the multitude listened. This constant habit of public life, this rage for haranguing lent a kind of solemn gravity to the deportment of the Romans, an official and majestic bearing as of men acting a dignified part in the great drama of life. They wore their ample togas, too, with a sort of sublimity which was very imposing. No wonder the Gauls were terrified at the aspect of these awful looking men, seated on their curule chairs, wrapt in their purple togas, outside the porticoes of their palaces. It was quite natural in the barbarians to take them for Gods.

Speeches were made in all places, and at all times; the *pater familias* harangued his family if the dinner did not please him. Germanicus harangued his attendants

before his death, Seneca was eloquent while seated in the fatal bath, and Thræsea spoke so much, one wonders that the patience of his friends was not exhausted.

Quintilian details amusingly the excess to which this rage for talking was carried, and gives rules for the proper deportment of an orator. He was neither to use his handkerchief, nor to spit, nor to cough; even a glass of sugared water is condemned as unbecoming. He is also advised not to use his arms too much, or to dilate his nostrils, or to raise his shoulders; he must not bite his lips, or leave the form where he stands. In reading these remarks, one involuntarily recalls Hamlet's advice to the players, and wonders if Shakspeare had studied Quintilian.

The women too, on any subject of special interest, also came down to the Forum to listen. Every reader of Livy remembers the indignation with which Porcius Cato inveighed against their appearance there when he made his famous attack on female privileges and luxury, on occasion of the proposed repeal of the Oppian law, "when the matrons could not be kept at home either by advice or shame, but beset every street and pass in the city, beseeching the men as they went down into the Forum to repeal the law." Cato plainly tells them that if each husband maintained his prerogative, they would

have less trouble with the whole sex, and reminds them of a certain tale, about a certain island, "where the whole race of males was exterminated by the women." While the laws remained such as they were, there was little fear of such a catastrophe occurring at Rome.

Yet with all this pompous education, and these interminable orations about patriotism and virtue (a word which Tacitus delights to use), virtue according to our ideas, was as unknown among the men, as it was disregarded by the women. There might be virtue in the fidelity of woman to her master, of the slave towards him who fed him, in the devotion of the courtier to his emperor, as in the case of Sejanus who saved his master's life at the risk of his own; but what was commonly called virtue, bore to our eyes the semblance of the grossest vice. The *virtuous* Cato, who, according to Plutarch, was convinced that a great reformation was necessary in the corrupt fashions then prevailing, left off wearing his purple robes, and dressed himself in black; but he did not scruple to *lend* his wife Martia to his friend Hortensius, "a man of great dignity and politeness;" nor did Martia's father Philip, being applied to on the occasion, see anything objectionable in this monstrous arrangement. Mæcenus too, the friend of Augustus, he of the luxurious villa, and the "perfumed tresses," who

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always *assisted* at the imperial orgies, actually married, and divorced the same woman, twenty different times.

Virtue was utterly impossible in a state where the marriage tie hung so loosely on the contracting parties. "Indeed," says Suetonius, disgusted at the profligacy around him in the days of the Empire, "vice does not even hide itself, nor does corruption blush. Nor indeed can it be otherwise, when those indulging in the most monstrous excesses, are not obscure adventurers, or mean and abject plebeians, but the greatest men of the state, consuls, legislators, philosophers, and emperors." Aristippus publicly taught in his philosophic school "that sensual enjoyment was the only true good," a doctrine at which even the luxurious Greeks would have blushed, for Epicurus himself advocated the highest intellectual culture, and the profoundest learning, as the means of enjoying that perfect pleasure in which he imagined man was born to indulge. When such habits prevailed among the men, and such principles were taught among philosophers, what *could* the Romans know of virtue?

The mischief learnt at the theatres, the amphitheatres, and the circus, I have already glanced at. It is too ample a field to discuss here appropriately. Within those stately buildings where vice reigned

supreme, excitement grew in the course of time to such a pitch, that consuls, senators, and emperors, descended into the arena and exhibited before the people. Caligula first set this disgraceful fashion, which was followed by Nero and Caracalla; at last Heliogabalus danced before the assembled Senate. There were favourite gladiators and charioteers, and favourite colours; actors intrigued with empresses, and athletes were often the most welcome guests in the imperial palace. Augustus, when delighting in the company of poets and philosophers, little foresaw the excess to which this imperial facility of access would be carried.

Three days and three nights at one time, the Romans are said to have sat in the Amphitheatre. The excitement of these spectacles was something incomprehensible, and the money lavished on them, age after age, utterly incredible. "Bread and the circus" was the cry, and from the lowest slave to imperial Cæsar, the same insatiable desire for constant novelty and amusement prevailed. Pompey once displayed six hundred lions in the arena; and on one occasion, Augustus gratified the citizens by making five hundred Getulians fight against twenty elephants.

Another fertile school for vice and luxury were the public baths, of which establishments Rome reckoned

eight hundred and fifty-six within her walls. Here, from the earliest dawn of day until midnight, the people came in never-ending streams, either to prepare for the fatigue of the coming day, to invigorate themselves after the warlike exercises in the Campus Martius, for the slumber of the siesta, or the excitement of the theatre and the circus. It is wonderful to read how they were scrubbed; modern skins would have been ruined by such treatment, yet they all liked it, and came in such multitudes, that the baths were soon reckoned among the proudest palaces in Rome. The enormous ruins that still remain of those of Titus, Caracalla, and Diocletian, attest the size and magnificence of these establishments. With such ruins before our eyes, we can easily believe the account historians give of the gigantic vestibules peopled with Grecian statues, and ornamented with forests of pillars formed of the rarest marbles, supporting roofs radiant with gold and painting, the spacious arcades for exercise, the refreshing groves where splashing fountains cooled the heated air, the halls furnished and ornamented with oriental luxury, the temples, the Odeons for music, the Exedrae, where the poets declaimed and philosophers disputed, every wall bright with frescoes and marble. The Baths of Diocletian contained thousands of private

apartments, large halls for swimming, and a magnificent library, adorned with statues of gods, heroes, and emperors. What can be more beautiful, than the mosaic pavement found in the Baths of Caracalla, and now preserved at the Lateran Palace? It tells volumes of the gorgeous splendour of these palatial structures.

In early times, the waters of the Tiber collected in the *Piscina publica*, sufficed to refresh the limbs of the vigorous republicans. Some of the richer senators might indulge in baths at home, but it was a luxury, and an exception. It is recorded as a fact worthy of mention, that Scipio Africanus, who was censured as being somewhat luxurious by his contemporaries, owned a little dark bath of his own, which, according to ancient usage, had small openings in the wall to let in the air, but no windows. The public baths constructed by Agrippa for the convenience of the people, soon came to be despised, "for who," says Seneca, "would bathe if the walls of the apartment were not ornamented with glittering stones of Numidian or African marble, and if varied ornaments did not decorate the floors, and statues and pillars sustain the roof; if abundant streams of water did not fall in bursting cascades, and the sun's rays not penetrate through spacious windows, so that the bather could at the same time enjoy the prospect of the

Campagna, and of the sea?" A letter of Seneca's has left a lively picture of the bathing life of his day while living at Baia, where he lodged over the baths.

Yet this magnificence was not carried out in the interior arrangements of the Roman houses. Spacious and grandly decorated as were many of the senatorial palaces, we moderns should have considered them destitute of the commonest comforts. How the Roman dames, who were so vain, managed to dress without mirrors, seems a miracle. What would Poppæa have given to have surveyed herself from head to foot in a modern looking-glass! How Agrippina would have rejoiced in the dignified pose, seated on the marble chair, in which she had come down to us, could she have seen herself reflected! Miserable substitutes there were, constructed of metal, but even our nineteenth-century waiting-women would have despised them. Such a convenient luxury as a watch was unknown; quadrants and sun-dials being the only means by which the Romans ascertained the course of time; these of course being utterly useless at night.

The commoner houses of the poorer citizens had low roofs, and the walls were generally built without windows; if there were any, they never opened upon the street. The principal light proceeded from the

door, for such windows as there might be, being covered with transparent marble, talc, cotton, or skins, gave but the feeblest and most opaque light. Specimens of the materials used by the ancients for windows, have been found at Pompeii, and sufficiently prove how miserably they were off. Such stairs too as they had, so steep and narrow, would have given us the cramp; and then the want of chimneys, and consequent smoke from the kitchens and braziers, added to the smell of the dinner preparing on the charcoal without any apertures to carry it off, would have smothered us outright. Neither should we have admired the fierce dogs, chained in the *cellæ* on either side of the door, nor have fancied the constant screeching of the geese kept in the houses, nor the long serpents creeping about among the embroidered cushions of the couches.

The style of dress too was as inconvenient as can well be conceived. The heavy toga of rough wool worn next the skin must have been extremely irritating, and partly accounts for the inevitable necessity of the baths. The Romans, Suetonius tells us, wore neither stockings nor drawers, but in place of these invaluable articles of dress, strips of linen called *femoralia* were bound round the thighs, and other strips called *tibialia* were twisted round the legs. Truly "a most lame and

impotent conclusion" to the magnificence of these kings of the earth! The use of pockets was unknown, the cincture that bound the toga being the only convenience they possessed for keeping their money or handkerchief, as we learn from the satires of Juvenal and Aulus Gellius. Caps or hats were little used, they either went with the head bare, or covered only with a fold of the toga. No matter how it might rain when they went abroad, such a thing as an umbrella was unknown; they must trust to the thickness of those eternal togas to protect them, and if they caught a cold in consequence, and injured their sight, or if blindness ensued, there were no spectacles invented in those days, and a blind man must hire a little slave to lead him, as Homer did, in still more primitive times.

I am indebted to a living historian for the following graphic sketch of a Roman day. In the morning, while the *pater familias* indolently lingers in bed, a crowd of friends, freedmen, and parasites, assemble without in the vestibule. When he has risen, perfumed his hair, and arranged the folds of his toga, he appears, converses a few moments with those whom he desires to see, or who have business with him, and then descends into the Forum, either on foot surrounded by his clients, or borne in a litter on the shoulders of his slaves. Here a variety

of affairs claim his attention—politics, law, and money; he has a speech to declaim, or a debt to accommodate, or a purchase to make; for a time he is lost among the noise and bustle of the temples, the basilicas, the tribunals, the banks, the counters, the markets piled in pell-mell confusion round the Forum. The ancient, like the modern, Romans were a noisy race. But when the sun-dial marks twelve o'clock there is a sudden silence, the crowds grouped here and there disperse, the shops are shut, the tribunals deserted, and the temples abandoned. Twelve o'clock is the hour of the siesta, and not a living soul is stirring in the streets. The business of the day is over, and all affairs which are not concluded must be adjourned until to-morrow, for the remaining hours are sacred to sleep and to amusement. The beggar and the wretched outcast slave lie huddled in their rags under the marble arcades, while the *pater familias* reposes in the solitude and silence of his ample palace, lulled by the sound of the water splashing in the *cavædium*. At two o'clock the Roman world awakes, but now the crowd takes a new direction. Amusement is the order of the day, and it is towards the Campus Martius their steps are directed, where, on the luxuriant grass that carpets the vast expanse, the Roman youth exercise themselves in athletic games; fling the javelin

or the ball, or bathe in the waters of the Tiber, while the older citizens sit by observing their prowess, and the women walk under the neighbouring colonnades. Towards four o'clock the baths are open, and thither every one hastens, the poor and the middling classes to the public *Thermæ*, the rich man to the voluptuous recesses of his splendid abode—but all must bathe, it is an absolute necessity. Within the public baths are the vast *Piscinæ* for swimming, the tepid and the vapour bath, as well as perfumes, frictions, and ointments, all refined and sumptuous luxuries open to every class for a trifling payment. The floors are of mosaic, the *Piscinæ* of alabaster, the ceilings painted in fresco, the walls inlaid with gold and ivory; there are gardens and groves; temples for the priests, porticoes for the philosophers, a gymnasium for running, libraries, an Odeon for music, and *Exedræ* where poets declaim. After the bath the rich man returns home to enjoy the great meal of the day, the supper.

Magnificent as were the Forums, the *Thermæ*, the Campus Martius, and other open spaces in the ancient city, the streets where people lived are described as being excessively narrow, filthy, and inconvenient. At night darkness, black as pitch, enshrouded everything; and no Roman, who had any regard either for his skin,

or his purse, ventured forth, for robbers abounded in every quarter, going about, as Horace says, invoking the assistance of the Goddess Laverna, the protectress of midnight deeds of wrong and violence. The streets of Rome have in all ages borne an extremely bad reputation, and it seems to me that this same wicked goddess has still many ardent worshippers in the great city. That the roads and streets were disgustingly ill kept, we may infer from various incidental circumstances mentioned by historians; the dead body of a slave or a child lying about, was nothing at all wonderful. When Tullia drove her coach through the *Via Scelerata* she was not surprised to find a corpse in her way, her charioteer only drew her attention to it as being the body of her father; and Nero, flying from Rome to conceal himself in the villa of his freedman Phaon, expressed no horror at seeing a dead body lying beside the road without the Nomentana Gate.

Mentioning the roads reminds me of the coaches and chariots—sad, heavy, tumble-down affairs indeed, even in the most luxurious days of the Empire. To possess one of these abominable vehicles at all, was considered a special privilege, which was accorded only to emperors, dictators, and patricians, or to such great ladies as Livia and Agrippina. Not all the solid gold and silver wasted

on them, an extravagance forbidden indeed, or at least moderated, by the Oppian law, about which Cato was so eloquent, could make them commodious or agreeable. How would a heavy machine drawn by oxen or mules suit our modern fancies? As to horses, they were out of the question, it would have been sacrilege to drive them, they being only used on state occasions, for conveying the consuls to sacrifice, for triumphs, and for drawing the purple couches containing the images of the gods, in great processions. With all its splendour, a modern fine lady would have found little to envy in the mode of life of the proudest empress that ever trod the Palatine.

I have pictured the Romans in the Forum, the baths, and at home; I must now spare a few lines descriptive of some of the festivals, which filled up so huge a portion of everyday life. Herodian tells us that the festival of the Bona Dea was celebrated in the spring, when a solemn procession passed through the city. It was a time of general amusement; every one was allowed to appear in masks, the principal diversion being to represent the magistrates and highest dignitaries, so that it was impossible to distinguish the maskers from the real senators. Every reader of Plutarch will recall the account he gives of the festival of the Bona Dea cele-

brated by the women, who, during the orgies, unbound their hair, crowned themselves with vine leaves, and ran screaming through the house like maniacs, every man, even the husband himself, having been previously sent out of the way. The new year was opened by the festival of Janus, believed by the Romans to be the son of their first king Saturn, who ruled in the golden age. It was their custom to salute each other on this occasion "most lovingly," to interchange valuable presents, and for the senators and magistrates to appear in their richest robes. A remnant of the saturnalia has come down to us in the modern carnival. Then, as now, liberty and equality were the order of the day. Masters dined with, or waited on, their slaves in the good old time, and a general freedom prevailed that too often degenerated into the grossest license. In the Lupercalian games young men of noble families, and indeed many of the magistrates, ran naked about the streets, and, by way of diversion, struck everyone they met, with leathern thongs. On one occasion, Plutarch tells us, Cæsar, wearing a triumphal robe, seated himself in a golden chair upon the rostrum to see the diversion. Antony, who was consul, so far forgot his senatorial dignity, as to comply with the general rule, or rather misrule, and appear naked along with

the rest, and in this guise tendered the imperial crown to Cæsar.

A most important portion of the domestic economy of the Roman interiors were the slaves, whose miserable fate especially deserves our attention as opening a fresh vista in these domestic details by which I would endeavour to bring the actual life and everyday habits of the Romans before the stranger. While such arbitrary laws, unsightly and disgusting manners, and utter disregard of human life and human suffering, prevailed among the senatorial and imperial families, what was to become of the poor slaves, that second grade of created beings, who, bought and paid for by their masters, became his absolute property, "*roba*," as unalienably his as his wife, but, unlike her, having no hope of exchange, no law to protect their morals, or even their lives? That black and horrible stain on Roman manners, slavery, unfolds a shocking and heart-rending picture of suffering and despair; it was, perhaps, the foulest plague spot of the whole foul system.

Cicero openly advocates the degradation of female slaves. "Who," cries he, in his oration *Pro Coelio*, "has ever blamed the practice? Who has ever forbid it? What every century has permitted our own must also acquiesce in." The cruelty with which both sexes were

treated is distressing to contemplate. If their master were assassinated by one of their number, the law provided that every individual male or female slave under his roof should suffer death, for an act of which, perchance, they were profoundly ignorant. Pedanius Secundus, prefect of the city, says Tacitus, fell by the sword of his slave. Every slave in the house, four hundred in number, was therefore subject to capital punishment; but the populace, touched by compassion at the fate of so many innocent persons, opposed their execution with violence. The affair was debated in the senate. "Who," it was said, "can hope to live in security, when so large a number as four hundred could not protect Pedanius?" Still, spite of the opinion of the fathers, great public disapprobation was expressed; the number, the age, the sex, the undoubted innocence of the greater part, moved even the obdurate Romans to compassion. The popular cry was for mercy, but Nero negatived the appeal, he sent his guards to line the streets, and the miserable slaves all perished.

Slaves were tortured to please their master's caprice, their sufferings giving a crowning jest to his midnight orgies. Sometimes they were crucified to gratify a whim. Suetonius gravely celebrates the *clemency* of Julius Cæsar, who "*only* punished with death" a slave accused of

attempting to poison him. "Who were the accusers? Do you then imagine that a slave is a man? It is likely enough he has done nothing to deserve death, but what matters? his master orders it, he commands it, and his will is law."

That slaves humanely treated were capable of real and devoted attachment to a good master, is proved by an anecdote related by Plutarch concerning Cornutus. When Marius and Cinna returned from their banishment to Rome, a horrible slaughter took place of those citizens disaffected to their cause. Every road, every neighbouring town was filled with hired assassins; no obligation of friendship, no rights of hospitality, were deemed sacred. In this season of extreme peril the slaves of Cornutus, aware that their master's life was in danger, concealed him in his own house, and taking a dead body out of the street from among the slain, hung it up by a rope, and put his own gold ring on the finger. In this condition they displayed the corpse to the executioners despatched by Marius, who, supposing Cornutus dead, allowed them to bury it with the same forms, as if it had been their master. The deception was quite successful, no suspicions arose, and Cornutus, after remaining some time concealed, was conveyed by his slaves into Galatia.

The immense and almost countless multitude of slaves that peopled Rome were principally prisoners, brought from conquered nations to grace the triumph of the victorious generals, or they were imported on speculation by merchants. Slaves and prisoners appeared in the gladiatorial games at the amphitheatre, the circus, and the naumachia ; they suffered and shed their blood for the diversion of the citizens, they had the honour of saluting Cæsar and then dying, to afford him a *passa-tempo*, they waited upon the public in the baths, and performed every menial duty in the house. It was by their patient and painful labour that those wondrous roads were constructed, which, starting from the *milliarium aureum* in the Forum, traversed the entire globe. Their hands reared those gigantic works that still defy the ravages of time,—the aqueducts, the Colosseum, the temples ; they built, they planted, they sowed ; their life was one perpetual struggle. Often, during the rapid construction of any public building like the Colosseum, the soil was literally strewed with their corpses. They died where they stood, labouring—others took their place ; there was no voice to pity, no hand to assist them in their mortal agony.

The slave market of ancient Rome was a great sight. It was in the Forum, near the *Græcostasis* of which some

fragments are said to remain within the temple of Castor and Pollux, now the church of SS. Cosmo e Damiano. A temple, a slave market, and a church,—what strange metamorphoses the old walls of Rome witness! Here, those speculators who had bought human flesh wholesale from the republic, retailed it to private individuals. The day after a triumph, the enclosure was sure to be crowded to excess. Along the façade of the temple, and around the neighbouring colonnades, scaffolds were erected, filled with men, women, boys, girls, and children, most of them naked, and with a little ticket fastened round their necks. An auctioneer promenaded up and down before each scaffold, and in the sight of the assembled people expatiated on the live stock—a fellow, this auctioneer, voluble, vulgar, and brutal in his manners and language. Horace himself has painted the scene from the life. “Good people,” cries the man merchandising in humanity, “I am not rich, but, for all that, I am in no hurry to sell. I have no debts. Observe these lots! I offer them to you at a price so moderate, that I defy you to find slaves elsewhere as cheap. Indeed I would not, I *could* not, make such a sacrifice for any other but you illustrious Romans, masters of the world.

“Look now at this young boy,” he continues, pointing to a youth. “Look how splendidly he is shaped from

head to foot. I will guarantee his frugality, his probity, and docility. He flies to obey the slightest sign, he is as clay in the hands of his master. He also understands a little Greek, and will sing to you at table if you have no music." Then approaching the boy, he raps him smartly on the cheeks. "Do you," says he, turning towards the bystanders, "do you hear how that sounds? how it rings? Never was such fine firm flesh, illness will never touch him. Citizens, Romans, I offer this youth to you a real bargain. He is yours for eight hundred sesterces, it is nothing—a *bagattella*."

The man of ready words then passes on to another, a child. "Come be alive, be alert, my little fellow," cries he, "show your agility to these gentlemen,—the masters of the world, the equals of kings." Upon hearing which exordium the poor child starts up, jumps, and springs, and gambols about, casting all the while fascinating leers at the crowd, like a ballet-dancer poised on the tips of his toes. The crowd press round and stare. "See," exclaims the auctioneer, "how nimble he is! how light! how merry! how sweet! A little angel truly. But citizens," says he, turning emphatically towards the assembly, "this is all very well, *non c'è male*, I have shown you here some tolerable specimens, fair samples of the commodity, but if you will come with me to my em-

porium, you will see goods of another kind of stuff there, I promise you—quite another style. These slaves here on the scaffolding are not all my stock in trade ; all that I possess most rare, delicate, and beautiful, are kept in the inner boxes. Come within, good citizens. Follow me ; come in, I pray you,”

This scene was only the prelude, the first act in the drama of the future woes of these miserable slaves. Let us follow the poor wretches to their purchaser's house, the better to appreciate their condition. On crossing the threshold we enter the vestibule ; right and left are two niches, in one lies a mastiff chained to the wall, in the other a slave, also chained, the *janitor* or porter. If the house be sold, he will be sold with it ; if it be burnt he will perish with it. Further on are the sweepers, or *scoparii*, the domestic slaves. Some are sweeping the mosaic floors of the Atrium with a purple rag, or a sponge ; some with a light brush dust the statues of bronze, or marble, placed between the colonnades ; others are rubbing the glistening marble of the pillars and the walls, until they shine like glass ; even Domitian would have been satisfied, and could have walked there without fear, for so great is their brilliancy that he might have perceived any assassin approaching from behind to strike him.

Some slaves look after the sideboards and the household presses, while others have charge of the family registers and the images of their master's ancestors. The kitchen swarms with slaves; the *coquus* prepares the dishes, labouring by his skill to awake his master's jaded appetite. He has achieved such wonders, that slave, by his patient ingenuity, that he can cook a pig boiled on one side, and roasted on the other; the pastry-cook, *pistor dulciarius*, cunningly mixes all the spices and perfumes of Arabia and of India in his sweet wares, and for fear that, in his zeal, a drop of moisture should fall from his skin upon the rich paste, he wears a veil. There is a separate slave to look after the milk, the apples, and the fruit, and to mix the delicious drinks, of which the ancient, as well as the modern, Romans are so fond. Another slave drives away the flies from the dishes, and there is also the taster, *obsonator*—and woe, seven times woe, on his unlucky pate, if he mistakes his master's taste or palate; the loss of life may be the least penalty inflicted on him.

When the repast, which has given employment to so many hands, is at last prepared, the *invitatores*, whose duty it is to announce the company, loudly proclaim the names of the guests who are that day to repose on their master's couches, while the *inferiores*, waiters, bring the

dishes into the Sala, and the *structores* range them with taste and symmetry on the board. The master and his guests have appeared in the meantime, and stretching themselves on the gold or ivory couches, strewn with rose leaves and down, and covered with splendid Alexandrian tapestry, prepare to partake of all the luxuries displayed before them. Between the courses, the *pocillatores* present Falernian or Chio wine, sparkling high in jewelled cups and golden goblets, while at their heels follow other slaves bearing fresh and tepid water, in precious vessels of sculptured gold or silver. Near the couches on which the company lie luxuriously stretched, are ranged a row of young slaves, remarkable for their beauty and the elegance of their attire; their legs and arms are bare, and they wear turbans. Each has his office; one holds a branch of flowering myrtle, to chase away the flies; some sprinkle perfumes, or fan the air; others carefully watch those who are intoxicated, and assist them, as well as other guests who desire to eat again, by conducting them into an adjacent room, the vomitorium. For these minute traits of Roman manners we are indebted to the pen of the satirical Martial, and the stoical Philippius of Seneca.

When night spreads round her inky mantle, the slaves are in high activity; glittering candelabra, and thousands

of torches blaze through the perfumed halls, borne by the hands of the *inferiores*; delicious symphonies of exquisite music entrance the senses, already lapped in luxurious repose, by the plenteous repast and the potent wine. Troops of young slaves enter and perform dances, borrowed rather from the rites of Venus than those of Diana; they sing hymns of praise extolling the power and goodness of their masters, the poor slaves! To those voluptuous dances succeeds a more cruel and exciting exhibition; the gladiators are introduced, they prepare their limbs, they draw their daggers, and amidst half emptied glasses, withering garlands, expiring torches, and broken dishes, beside the soft couches on which the inebriated company recline, swords are crossed, blows are exchanged, blood flows in plenteous streams, the groans of the dying, and the laughter and applause of the living uniting to form a hideous chorus.

From the triclinium to the baths, from the baths to the gardens, the villa, the farm, the fields, troops of slaves start from every corner. There is nothing too mean, too low, too humiliating for them to perform. If you can invent any new degradation, their masters will thank you. In all ages slavery is the same: be it in the early annals of Rome, or in the nineteenth century, the same crushing pride and cruel

despotism in the oppressor, the same servile spirit in the oppressed.

A curious tomb was discovered at Rome bearing this inscription : " The bones of Aurelia, the slave of Livia, she who took care of her little dog." Another tomb, bearing an inscription, purports to be commemorative of some female slaves belonging to the same Livia, consort of Augustus, who had charge of the imperial locks, a truly noble occupation, esteemed equally honourable and as worthy of monumental record as that of Aurelia. If Augustus was a plain, simple citizen, Livia assuredly was a genuine empress.

The superb matron of Rome would not condescend to exchange words with such *canaglia* as her slaves ; a sign of the hand, the pointing of her finger, was sufficient—commands which, if mistaken or misunderstood by the unhappy slave, an iron lash quickly advertised him of the unlucky mistake.

Cato the Censor, otherwise a just and moral man, boasts of the blows he caused to be inflicted on a tardy slave. " Be economical," says he : " sell both your horse and slave when they are old and useless." Plutarch inveighs against his meanness and cruelty in using his slaves " like beasts of burden." A good man, in his opinion, ought ever to take care of his infirm dogs and

horses ; but these were Grecian ideas, and much too humane for Roman legislators. If, indeed, a master did not wish to expose himself to remark by following the advice of an old screw like Cato, there was always the island on the Tiber, where the infants were exposed—an excellent place for the slaves to be sent to—and where they died quite quietly, under the shadow of the lofty fane dedicated to Æsculapius ; or they could be shut up in their *cellæ*, and left until exhausted nature died out, like the wick of an expiring candle, when four of their fellows would bear out the shrivelled form, and carry it to some corpse-mound on the accursed Esquiline. Augustus shortened the process considerably by crucifying his slaves when they offended him. Caligula fed the wild beasts of the arena with the prisoners and the slaves. And why not ? They had no souls, the poor slaves, and the Romans did not believe that they were created in the image of their Maker. Christianity and its divine precepts were still buried in the bosom of Omniscience. Men knew no better ; and yet we, who live eighteen hundred years after its light has been spread over the world, read of the same crimes still, although the slave-master knows that those human beings are immortal, and that they, as well as he, reflect the image of the Eternal.

It is a sad and weary task to unfold these horrors—to withdraw the glittering veil hanging before these superb palaces, and display the foulness, the misery, the degradation within. It is an ungracious labour ; but if, when the reader next gazes on the ruined pile of the Palatine, on the broken fragments of Rome's once glorious temples, or on the massive arches and cyclopean blocks of Caracalla's Baths, he shall feel that he is better acquainted with the inner life, the daily passing details of those incredible day by day incidents of the ancient Romans, I am satisfied, and this chapter will not have been written in vain.





THE PALATINE, THE REPUBLIC, AND AUGUSTUS.

I HAVE again and again visited the mysterious home of Rome's imperial splendour, the Palatine. I have spun many day dreams under the shadow of those almost unintelligible ruins. Within the deep cavernous recesses that yawn hideously at every step, I have read, I have thought, I have pondered. At length a fancy possessed me to build up the ruined walls, and, passing over almost two thousand years, picture the Palatine as it then appeared, diademed with palaces and temples.

The ancient seat of Evander's Arcadian city, the Pallanteum, where he received Hercules, was the first inhabited of the seven somewhat fabulous hills of Rome. Here also Æneas was entertained when, coming from Latium, he visited the good old king, who did not deny his only son, Pallas, to his prayers for assistance against Turnus and his Rutulian bands.

Evander, in conversation with his guest, gives the following account of the origin of the Palatine. "These

groves," said he, "the native fauns and nymphs possessed, and a race of men sprung from the roots of trees and stubborn oaks, who had neither laws nor refinement, knew neither to yoke the steer nor to gather wealth, nor to use their acquisitions with moderation; but the branches and hunting—a rough sort of sustenance—supplied them with food. From the ethereal sky Saturn first came. He formed into society a race, undisciplined and dispersed among the high mountains, and introduced laws. Under his reign was the golden age which they celebrated."

Next came Romulus, the god-descended founder of Rome, who, with his brother, washed to the foot of the Palatine by the current of the Tiber, raised the first stones of the infant city on its summit, surrounding it with a wall of defence. Then was the first crime committed that stained the virgin soil with blood, when Romulus, standing on the brow of the Palatine, quarrelled with Remus about the disposition of the wall, and slew him there with his own hand. On the acclivity of the mount Romulus erected his little cabin of reeds and wood; its front, according to Vitruvius and Dionysius, turned towards the Aventine, overlooking the spot where the *Circus Maximus* was afterwards constructed. Beside the hut, the grotto of the Lupercal opened in the hill's

rocky side—a sanctuary of extraordinary antiquity, where Pan and Faunus, and the sylvan deities of the primeval woods that clothed the seven hills, were worshipped. Further down the hill, in due time was erected a temple to Jupiter Stator (he that arrests in fight), in memory of Romulus' vow, during his famous battle with Tatius and the Sabine hosts, so nearly fatal to the infant State.

The five first kings of Rome fixed their habitation on the Palatine ; Tullus Hostilius is specially recorded as inhabiting his house called *Velia*, on the crest of the hill. From hence he went forth to fight against the Sabines. But after a while, whether it were that Tullus had neglected the worship of the gods whilst he was busy in the wars or no, certain it is that the signs of divine wrath became manifest, for a dreadful plague broke out, and when Tullus inquired of Jupiter, “supremely good and great,” to stay it by his favour, the god was angry, and sent for answer his forked lightning, so that Tullus and his house *Velia* were burnt to ashes. (Such is the fabulous account.)

Ancus Martius, grandson to Numa, the peaceful King of Rome, lived three-and-twenty years in his house facing the Via Sacra, where afterwards stood the sanctuary of the Lares.

The abode of the first Tarquin, the Etruscan Lucumo, was on the other side of the hill, near the hut of Romulus. Here he dwelt with his Medea-wife Tanaquil, in great power and prosperity, until the sons of Ancus Martius hired certain assassins to kill him, when Tanaquil, who was great and heroic in mind, seeing what had befallen, went out and harangued the people assembled below, in the Forum which her husband had built, telling them he was not dead, but only stunned by the blow, and that he had appointed Servius Tullius to rule in his name, until he should be well. So Servius went down in royal state from the Palatine into the Forum, and after a while the people knew the truth, and accepted him as their ruler.

But at the decline of the republic, the lowly roofs which had contented the early kings and their successors, the first dictators, and Consuls Camillus, and Titus Manlius, sufficed not to gratify the luxurious wants of men, nursed in Asiatic luxury. So these humble abodes fell before the stately mansions of the Gracchi, of Cicero, Claudius, Catiline, Marc Antony, and Augustus, who each owned a house on the summit of the Palatine, whose gloomy brow, ominously overhanging the seat of national liberty, the Comitium, and the Forum, symbolized significantly the dark shadow their growing ambition cast on the liberties of the Quirites.

The Gracchi, in particular, are said to have lived here in princely luxury. Here the renowned Cornelia received her friends, and made set speeches for posterity ; and here, too, those twelve children were born of whom she was so proud. After all, Cornelia, with all her much vaunted virtue, seems to have possessed an inordinate share of vanity ; she was always urging on her sons Tiberius and Caius in that political career which ended so tragically for both, in order that her maternal feelings might be gratified by the title of "Mother of the Gracchi," instead of that of "Mother-in-law of Scipio," Scipio having married her daughter.

Tiberius Gracchus was a most amiable character, a rare specimen of a humane Roman, such an unaccountable character among the ancients that he got murdered because no one understood him. No wonder the air of the Palatine did not agree with him. How could a man whose language, as Plutarch says, was "chaste," and his habits "frugal," who loved the plebeians, and passed the agrarian law, expect to die quietly in his bed? The usual charge was brought against him that he wanted to make himself a king, and one ill-disposed person, a "next neighbour" on the Palatine, had the audacity to swear that poor Tiberius kept by him a royal diadem and a purple robe, for his use when he was king. A second

senator, seeing the noble patriot bearded, gave him a further dastardly kick, saying "that the other citizens put out their lights when they returned home at unseasonable hours, but that Tiberius paraded his people carrying torches." These were serious accusations truly, and made the friends of Tiberius quake for his safety ; but the affair assumed a most grave and appalling aspect, when the sacred chickens, although soundly shaken, refused to eat, and when one actually raised its left wing and stretched out its leg. Tiberius then gave himself over for lost, and trembled and quaked in good earnest, specially as two ravens fought over his head as he was going down to the Forum.

It was written that Tiberius should die like Cæsar, surrounded by the Senate, in spite of these warnings. The conspirators plucked him by the robe, as they did Cæsar, others crowded round, and each gave him a stab. Poor Tiberius ! he was worthy of a better fate, but Rome was unworthy of him, so he died.

Then came his brother Caius, vehement and impassioned, running from one end of the rostrum to the other when he addressed the people, and throwing off his gown to gesticulate the more freely. So violent indeed was Caius, and so given to an unmusical scream when speaking, that to guard against these vocal excesses, he ordered

his slave Licinius, specially immortalised "as a sensible man," to stand behind him with a pitchpipe and give him a dulcet note now and then, when he was bellowing outrageously. But it fared with him as with the gentle Tiberius: the Romans grew weary of his rule, although to flatter them he left the "family house" on the Palatine, and went down to live in the Forum, among the plebs and the refuse of the people. This move, however, did him no good, for one fine day, spite of the affectionate remonstrances of his wife Licinia, who entreated him to remember the fate of Tiberius, he would go forth, and was hunted down like a dog, and killed in the public streets by the very plebs he had courted. Along with him perished his colleague Fulvius Flaccus, also the owner of a fine house on the Palatine, who could not escape from the treacherous villains who pursued him, although he concealed himself in an *old bath*, a pretty hiding place for an ancient Roman, truly!

Catullus, who triumphed with Marius over the Cimbri, lived here, too, as Pliny says, "in great magnificence." Truly when I look around I wonder where all these splendid abodes ever stood; for, not content with vast mansions, the haughty patricians must have temples too: Catullus erecting one "To the fortune of that day," because in the battle against the Cimbri, when surrounded

by enemies, he made a vow if he escaped, to raise a shrine to the deity who "ruled the hour" in that moment of extreme peril.

Cicero, the shuffling, shrewd, hawk-eyed lawyer, "the gentleman of the long robe," *par excellence* in Roman annals, by turns a coward and a bully, many faced, and various, as suited in his own interest, or the complexion of the times, lived in vast splendour on the Palatine, on the very spot once occupied by the abode of Lucius Crassus. Although Cicero's patrimonial estate was small, by his marriage with the haughty shrew Terentia he became the master of large revenues, so giving up "the house in the city" he formerly occupied, he betook himself to the aristocratic Palatine, in order, as he declared, "that those clients who sought him might not have so far to go." A specious reason, and one that to this day would authorise a distinguished statesman in selecting an extravagantly expensive situation, because "*it is in the way.*"

A magnificent house did the great orator inhabit with the rich widow, his Xantippe-wife, adorned, among other novelties, with the first large marble columns ever seen in Rome. He held a *levee* every morning, being sought no less for his eloquence, than Crassus for his wealth, or Pompey for his power. Cicero was courted, too, because

he was useful, as the time served, to all, being little troubled by pangs of conscience, occasioned by political inconsistency. Thus went the world in early times, and Pompey came to pay his court to the *à la mode* orator dwelling on the Palatine, and to look also at the new columns, and wonder at the magnificence in which Cicero lived.

Catiline was Cicero's near neighbour, for he, rich, powerful, and ambitious, not to be behind the fashion, had his Palatine house, too, at the "*West end*" of the town, a vicinity that was like, by-the-by, to have proved fatal to Cicero, for, when Catiline found that he had discovered his conspiracy, and meant to arraign him before the Senate, he desired his accomplices, Martius and Cethegus, to step across and assassinate his noisy neighbour, under the pretext of "saluting" him, along with the other worshippers collected every morning in his Vestibulum. But Cicero (who at heart was a great coward, spite of all his eloquent blusterings) smelt the plot, and refused them admittance. So frightened, indeed, was he at the thought of the danger to which he was still exposed, that he would not even go down into the Forum, but convoked the Senate (who were gradually becoming servile and obedient, in preparation for the advent of the Cæsars), to deliberate on the means of destroying the

conspiracy, within the Temple of Jupiter Stator, which stood on the Palatine.

I have not done yet with my ancient "*red book*" of names and addresses. None of the mighty patricians must be forgotten, but especially not Marcus Emilius Scaurus, who owned, too, says Pliny, "perhaps *the* grandest house of all." When he was *Ædile* he spent such vast sums of money in exhibiting games to the people, that among other trifles he erected a temporary theatre, ornamented with paintings, and with three thousand marble statues, besides hundreds of pillars, all of which were afterwards set up in his house on the Palatine, to his great glorification. He must have been a cunning man, that Scaurus, to please the people and gratify himself at the same time. Milo and Publius Clodius, the lover of Cæsar's wife Pompeia, lived here, too, for many years, quite near neighbours, without having, in fact, any unpleasant bickerings. But politics, at last, set them sorely by the ears, and meeting, one unlucky day, on the Appian Way, not far from Bovillæ (near the Osteria going to Albano, called Frattocchie), their attendants came to blows, and then the masters joining in, Milo dealt Clodius a blow, and Clodius fell. So much for near neighbours on the Palatine, Cicero and Catiline, and Milo and Clodius.

Now the Roman houses themselves, as well as their owners, were quite a study in those days, by reason of their size, splendour, and decoration, and deserve a few words of description, especially as referring to the Palatine, whose rocky sides groaned under the load placed on it by the competition of Rome's republican citizens. Between the street and the façade was a large open space called Vestibulum, similar to the cortile preceding many ancient Roman churches, built on the site of palatial houses, such as Santa Cecilia, San Gregorio, and San Alessio on the Aventine, a style of building, Tacitus tells us, that was afterwards generally introduced by Nero. In Cicero's house it was a necessary appendage, in order to prevent those troublesome clients (who came every morning to offer him their salutations) from actually standing in the street. In the midst of the Vestibulum usually stood a statue of bronze, representing the master of the mansion. The entrance-door, of double panels, covered with brass and heavy gilt nails, such as may still be seen in modern palaces at Rome and Florence, led into the Prothyrum, a passage conducting from the outer to the inner entrance,—on either side of which were the *Cellæ*, or lodges of the porter and of the dog, often an important member of the establishment, as in the case of Ulysses. The porter, a miserable slave,

tied like the dog by a chain, was a biped that *might* be bribed or deceived, the quadruped *never*. He knew the lover from the husband, whether in the case of Terentia or of Penelope ; the one he hated and barked at, on the other he fawned.

The opposite end of the Prothyrum communicated by a door with an interior area, surmounted by a stately portico, supported by marble columns. This was the Atrium. The colonnaded portico was called the *Cavædium*, and the open space in the centre the Impluvium. A marble basin in the midst was the Compluvium, so called because it received the rain washed down from the roofs of the surrounding arcades, all very classically elegant doubtless, but painfully damp and cold. Very delightful it must have been in summer to walk under the deep shade of the marble porticoes and listen to the gurgling of the fountains that splashed in the Compluvium, to contemplate the brilliant frescoes painted on the walls, and the Grecian statues of bronze and marble, brought to Rome, perhaps, at the time of the conquest of Syracuse or Macedonia, the works perchance of Praxiteles or Phidias, and to have one's heart rejoiced by the gold, the stucco, the mosaic, and the alabaster around ; all very charming in summer, I say, when a purple cloth covered the Impluvium, warding off the

sun's rays ; pouring down in the same fervid streams which even now make the cabbages and the beans swell larger in the Palatine gardens than elsewhere. But cold, cold and very dreary, must those spacious halls have been, when the winter wind howled through the pillared aisles. Cold, indeed, as the sacred cave of Jove Trophonius at Labadia, whither those votaries who sought the oracle descended, conducted by Æolus and Boreas, unchaining all the winds of heaven in their path.

Three spacious halls opened from the Atrium. In the centre was the Tablinum, containing the archives of the family. The two others, right and left, were dedicated to the *Alæ*, or sculptured images of their ancestors, each portrait and statue standing in a separate niche, with the names, titles, honours, and great or little actions, as the case may be, of the individual engraven on the base.

Around the remaining portions of the Atrium, were the Tricliniæ, or festive halls, where, under pillars garlanded with laurel, the guests lay on soft couches, strewn with rose leaves, their brows wreathed with fresh flowers, quaffing sparkling Falernian in jewelled cups. These Tricliniæ were disposed so as to suit the various seasons : the summer halls faced the north, those occupied in the spring and autumn the east, while for the winter the west was preferred. For the *mezza stagione*

the couches were incrustated with silver and tortoise-shell ; for winter gold and ivory were selected, while for summer precious woods, jointed and sprinkled with silver, were preferred as coolest ; the cushions and the coverings of silk or purple embroidered in gold, pearls, or precious stones, according to the means of the owner. When one remembers the delicate coloured marbles that supported the glittering roof, soft rose colour, delicate amber, or transparent alabaster, the brilliant mosaic pavements, the candelabra, the purple and gold draperies suspended from the ceiling, and falling in heavy folds around the columns, the flowery festoons wreathing the pillars, the vases of flowers, the gushing fountains, the delicious perfumes, "Sabeian odours from the spicy shore," we must allow that we are but pigmies in our notions, when compared with the full-grown magnificence of the Ciceros, the Mamurras, the Valerians, the Syllas. These were the gentlemen who understood *how to live*, while we, poor wretches, by the revolution of centuries, have only learnt *how to labour* !

Within the spacious wings of the Atrium were also the kitchens, the *Carceres*, and the *Equilia* ; the *Pistrina* where the bread was made, and the lodgings of the slaves. This formed the public portion of the mansion, accessible to friends and clients, the "*show-rooms*," in fact,

where all was kept in muslin and lavender. But now, penetrating through two corridors, called *fauces*, on either side of the *tablinum*, we enter the peristyle, along porticoes supported by pillars, forming an inner cortile, or atrium, more superb than the former. Statues rise beside every column, graceful statues, of the symbolised divinities of Greece, divided by precious vases, filled with flowering shrubs, placed between each pedestal, while fountains and rushing streams, and the warbling of singing birds, heighten the beauty of these enchanting homes.

At the extremity of the peristyle lay the *Gynæceum*, or women's apartments, where such Roman matrons as Portia, Pompeia, Cornelia, and Julia reposed amid a world of purple, precious stones, and soft enervating magnificence. In this private portion of the building was the library, with a great gallery adjoining, for the reception of philosophers. The basilica, or, private saloon, the baths, the tennis-ground, and smaller chambers destined for various games. The *cubicula*, or sleeping rooms, furnished with beds of yew, cedar, or pine wood, and counterpanes of valuable fur; also couches for reading and writing, covered with costly materials. Here was the *sacrarium*, or private oratory, and the *solarium*, a terrace, extending the whole length

of the building, used as a private promenade for exercise or contemplation.

Such were the abodes—magnificent but cold and comfortless—in which the magnates of the Roman world passed their hours of idleness. But Cicero, although possessed of such a stately mansion, could not nevertheless always enjoy it—thanks to the haughty Terentia—but was glad to beg a bed and dinner from a friend. For instance, on the occasion of the celebration of the rites of the Bona Dea, Terentia invited the Vestal virgins *in*, and turned the men, especially her husband, *out*, although history relates awkward stories of men let in “by accident,” in woman’s attire. Such scandal happened not, however, under Cicero’s roof, for Terentia was too outrageous a virago to possess a lover. Cicero left this domestic addition to his friend Julius Cæsar, who, it seems, looked after Dame Fortune with a keener eye than Dame Pompeia. So Cicero, as I said, turned out of doors by his wife, accepts the hospitality of a friend, leaving the women to rage, and scream, and rush to and fro along the stately halls, with streaming hair and torn garments, without any jealousy of impertinent Clodiuses being admitted.

The house of which Cicero was so proud, was pulled down during his banishment by that same meddling

demagogue Clodius, who caused the site to be consecrated, in order more effectually to keep out the proprietor. But Cicero, on his return from exile, furiously opposed this measure, and stoutly demanded that the ground should be restored to him. He addressed the assembled pontiffs on the occasion, the burden of every period being, "My house, my house, give me back my house," mixed up with a little raillery at the notion of Clodius' sudden enthusiasm for the gods, after his notoriously impious conduct, in regard to the sacred rites of the Bona Dea.

Valerius Publicola had a handsome house, too, on the Palatine, built on the foundations of the abode of Tullus Hostilius, which the lightning destroyed, but Jupiter, doubtless wroth at any man's daring to build on the ground consecrated by his sacred fire, stirred up the minds of the Quirites, who declared they would not suffer it to remain, so Publicola was forced to pull down his new walls to please "the people," and build elsewhere, in the valley below.

But let us pass on to the imperial palace, distancing all others, the *sedes romani imperii*, the home and abode of deified Cæsar, that uprose when the generations of which I have spoken had passed away, when Cicero and his colleagues were dead and turned to clay, and the

Romans had forgotten the very name of freedom. The palace where Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, and Claudius slept and dined, stood on the highest summit of the Palatine, opposite, and overlooking the Forum, reached by a goodly marble staircase, *per divum Victoriæ*, over and above the grotto of the Lupercal, opening in its rocky flanks; the traditionary refuge of Romulus and Remus, at whose mouth grew the Ruminal fig-tree, on the present site of the old doubled-up church of San Tanto. It was a noble prospect that same view from the palace of the Cæsars, facing the Forum on one side and the great Circus on the other; the whole universe never boasted a fairer scene. Augustus, indeed, when he first inhabited the Palatine, affected to be modest, and only calling himself "Prince of the Senate," ruled the world as it were by stealth, living all the while in a humble abode.

It always appeared to me that Augustus was never intended for a great man, and that his coming to be emperor of the world was a mistake. This extraordinary consummation was brought about by two circumstances; first, because Julius Cæsar his uncle happened to be assassinated; and, secondly, because his father the usurer, or banker (as he came afterwards to be called as sounding more genteel,) left the little town of Velletri

and removed to Rome, an act considered at the time quite presumptuous by the Roman people, who used to taunt Augustus, and say, "that his mother had covered him with flour," alluding to her being the daughter of a Velletri miller. But this little impediment did not prevent her son from lording it most imperially on the Palatine, and shedding Roman blood as freely as Sylla and Marius had done before him. In one day three hundred senators perished by his command.

So little did this pale, trembling youth seem adapted for the brilliant *rôle* he was selected to play, that, when he heard of his uncle's murder, and that he was named his heir, he actually was afraid ! It was a new thing for Julius Cæsar's victorious legions to be headed by a youth who could not make them an oration without having prepared it by heart, and who always travelled in a litter ; still this silent boy, who trembled and turned pale, managed to conquer his enemies, Antony, Sextus Pompeius, and all. He was wise enough also to be proof against even Cleopatra's seductions, though she tried them on him freely when Antony was beaten, showing himself therein much wiser than his great uncle. But then his uncle had wit and imagination, and the banker's son had neither. However he did what the other could not accomplish, he established order in Rome, torn with

intestine factions, the result of years of civil wars. He made his name both loved and feared, reformed the public manners after a fashion, though he could not reform his own, nor put a stop to the disorders of the two Julias, his daughter and granddaughter, otherwise than by banishment; swept the roads of bandits and assassins, who actually fell upon people in those times not to rob them, but to make them slaves! He was one of those cold unimpassioned characters that live by rule, make a plan and act up to it, without allowing heart or imagination to interfere. In fact, men like him are not troubled with such inconvenient supernumeraries, they only have a head!

Altogether, Augustus was just the man for the times—brilliant qualities would have been *de trop*. He had plenty of plain sound sense, he was determined to be master in a quiet way, and also to enjoy himself, so he ruled Rome though he was *not* called emperor, and lived on the Palatine, though his house *was* small. It was there he brought home his new wife Livia, “Ulysses in petticoats” as Caligula called her, whom he tore from her husband after he had divorced Scribonia, and committed various other little *faux pas*, duly recorded by friend Suetonius, who spares not imperial Cæsar in his bed-and-board vices.

On the Palatine were celebrated those bacchanalian meals called of "the twelve divinities," when the guests, attired as gods and goddesses (Augustus figuring as Apollo), imitated the circle of high Olympus. Pleasant little re-unions truly, at a time when Rome languished in famine, so that, while the Plebs and the Quirites starved, people laughed, and pointing with a shrug to the Palatine, said, "The gods had eaten up all the corn."

The house of Augustus at this time was neither remarkable for its magnificence nor for its size. "The corridors," says Suetonius, "were low, and instead of marble Alban stone lined the walls," an affectation of primitive simplicity and republican plainness, full of wisdom, and highly indicative of the astute common sense which invariably led Augustus *to be* rather than *to seem*.

Rome was nominally still a republic; laws were passed by the Senate; the people ruled; Augustus was not king—Heaven forbid! he never dreamed of such a thing, not he. He was neither a tyrant nor a dictator, he was a citizen. Far be it from him to play the fool like Julius Cæsar, who, not understanding the value of a name, hankered after the *title* of king, and was assassinated. Quite different was the wary Augustus, for when the Senate entreated him to

accept that dignity, he on his knees implored them to excuse him, and not to press upon him a title which he declared was utterly odious to him. He would not be even called lord; "He liked" (so he said) "to be addressed by his name, Caius Julius Octavius Augustus, being nothing but a plain Roman citizen, a simple, humble man, to whom was confided the charge of arranging the Republic." At the expiration of every ten years this comedy was renewed, he, praying to be released from the burden and care of public affairs, with affecting earnestness. "Indeed," he said, "that it was alone out of the love and respect he bore the Senate and the Republic, that he ever had encumbered himself with such responsibilities." This was really playing the farce in a masterly manner. Yet it was not quite consistent with those loud professions of humility, to accept the office of grand pontiff, to murder the senators, and to have his vestibule beset with as many clients and followers as though he were that nameless thing, an Emperor. The poor man, whose health was always failing, was literally overdone with honour and glory, and when he was indisposed, went off to a friend's house (Mæcenæ's,) to enjoy a little peace. If Augustus, in fact, had lived in the Shakesperian age he would have agreed in the poet's sentiment, "uneasy rests the head

that wears a crown," for a crown he did wear, spite of his protestations.

These were the days when imperial Cæsar, out of sheer affectation (for he was indeed a very tyrant), slept winter and summer on the same low bed with a common coverlet, and wore home-made clothes spun by his wife Livia and his daughter the naughty Julia; also stockings knit at home. A rare joke, while he himself was day and night knitting the web of Rome's subjection closer and closer, until he formed such a web she could never extricate herself,—the simple-hearted Emperor! These were the days when Augustus sat, like a good citizen, cooling himself in the Peristyle in hot weather; the days of simple suppers of three dishes, set on by dancers and actors; of poetical recitations between the courses in praise of virtue; of "the perfumed tresses" of his friend Mæcenas; days when he wrote to his successor, "My dear Tiberius,—I dine with the same persons; Vimicius and Silius's father came to-day, and increased the number of my guests. During the repast we played after the manner of old men, yesterday as to-day. After having thrown the thimbles, whoever drew 'a dog' or 'a six' contributed a piece of money for every thimble, but he who drew '*Venus*' had all." Yes, those were the days when "*Venus had it all*," but

worshipped in the person of *Anteros*, not *Eros*! In another letter Augustus writes: "My dear Tiberius, we have passed the festival of Minerva most agreeably; we played every day, and so often, that we kept the table warm; I lost 2,000 sesterces, but I might have gained 50,000, only I returned it to the players. It is best so, they will celebrate my liberality to the skies." Amiable old man! And then he goes on to tell his "dear Tiberius" how meagre is his fare, "eating in his carriage bread and dates;" and again, "that standing in the portico of his Palatine palace, he ate an ounce of bread with some dried raisins." A man must really be convinced of his own immortality who can think such details worth the chronicling. They remind one in their suggestive minuteness of the box of paint, and the mould of the beautiful bosom left in the burning lava-rock at Pompeii. Strange peeps these into the mists of bygone ages, that open for an instant and reveal the secrets they hide—then close again for ever.

It must have been really quite pathetic to behold passing along the splendid streets of Rome, a pale ordinary-looking man on foot, simply attired in a worsted cloak knit by his own wife and daughter; to see him elbowed and pushed by the crowd: it must have been quite edifying, I say, to see this, and then to be told that

that man was the great Augustus! And where might this humble citizen be going? Perhaps to the Comitium to vote for a friend, or to the tribunal to be surety for a client, or perchance to visit a senator whose daughter was about to marry; but always, you may be sure, bent on some strictly citizen duty. Who could believe him to be a king, seeing him so simple? He really acted his part well, but at times it was troublesome, especially when a common soldier, deceived by his hypocrisy, asked him, Augustus, to be his witness. "I have no time," answered the citizen Emperor, "I will send some one else." "Cæsar," replied the obstinate veteran, "when you wanted me, I never sent one in my place. I fought myself." For the sake of appearances the Imperator was obliged to go, feeling it inconvenient nevertheless.

Deified Augustus had a bright piercing eye, and desired to be thought to carry in his countenance something divine, "a look like Jove to threaten and command," but this god-man was afraid of being in the dark alone, had ugly spots all over his body which he scrubbed with a brush, could ill bear the excesses of heat or cold, trembled at thunder and lightning, always taking refuge during a storm in the cellars and vaults of the Palatine; was discomposed for the whole day if his left shoe was

put on his right foot, and objected to start on a journey if there was no dew on the grass !

But although Augustus might affect an imperial kind of liberty and equality, Livia queened it like a real Empress. She had her sumptuous baths on the Palatine which still remain, the faded colours of the frescoes yet clinging to the damp subterranean walls. She also had her slave Aurelia to look after her little dog, and other slaves to trim and dress her royal head, (all which particulars are engraven on their tombstones) which was being very like an Empress indeed !

Augustus, humble citizen though he was, delighted in spending the public money in the embellishment of the city, not forgetting to erect several Porticoes for himself, the grandest of which naturally stood close to his own house, being called the Palatine Portico, and dedicated to Apollo.

Another title was voted to Augustus which he *said*—but then he was *such* a hypocrite—that he prized more than all the rest. At first he refused this title when offered to him at Antium, by the assembled multitude crowned with laurel, in the theatre. But, when the Senate, without acclamation, or discussion, or any kind of diplomatic fuss and noise, spoke by the voice of Valerius Messala as one man, and said, “May the

presage be happy, Cæsar Augustus, for thee and thy house, the fathers and the people salute thee unanimously, 'Father of thy Country.'" Augustus shed tears, and replied, "All my desires are accomplished, Conscript Fathers, and I have now nothing more to ask of the celestial gods, but, that until my last days they will preserve your sentiments the same towards me." This is a touch of republican pathos very impressive.

That Augustus was immensely popular is certain. The people, who neither understood him, nor his subtle projects for the subversion of liberty, and only elbowed him in the streets, adored him. When this same humble abode of which I have spoken, without either pictures, statues, or marbles, that he inhabited on the Palatine, was burnt, veterans, decemvirs, tribunes, the whole people indeed, voluntarily contributed towards its reconstruction. But then Augustus gave them such splendid games, they could not help loving him. Such actors, buffoons, philosophers, and monsters, never were heard or seen before. Africa, Asia, and the whole west were ransacked to satisfy the popular craving for amusement. Boa-constrictors, fifty feet long, rhinoceroses, wild beasts, and wild horses, were exhibited; even the young nobles were forced to descend into the arena, along with the knights, to amuse the commons. These were brave

times for the plebs ; no wonder they loved that silent man in the woollen cloak, who created all these delights for their diversion. No wonder when he recovered from an illness, that a statue was erected to the physician that cured him. To build up his house was indeed the least they could do to show their gratitude ; but the unwitting people did more, for in return for the games, and the sights, and the actors, they surrendered that national jewel of great price—their *liberty* !





THE PALATINE.

THE EMPIRE.



FOR two years after the death of his adopted father, Augustus, the rigid and inscrutable Tiberius inhabited the Palatine palace in retirement, ever pretending an immediate departure, settling his equipage and attendants, but always procrastinating. At last the wits—for even in those dark days some Attic salt sprinkled and flavoured Roman dulness—gave him the nick-name of Callipedes, a Greek famous for always being in a hurry, and yet never advancing. Some additions were made to the imperial abode by this wily tyrant, who with assumed self-denial, declined the title of “Father of his Country,” and under the specious pretext of “the magnitude and weight of Empire,” “his love of retirement, and a life of ease,” and other set phrases recorded by the sarcastic pen of Tacitus, affected to withdraw from public business, watching meanwhile with lynx-eyed suspicion, every word that fell from the unfortunate senators, in order, on the slightest pretext, to remove

all who opposed his stealthy progress toward absolute power.

Yet, it would seem that this Claudius, dark and impenetrable and sanguinary, as he became after a long course of dissimulation, had once known better feelings, feelings of domestic sympathies, and of household pleasure. Who knows but that the loss of his beloved Agrippina, the mother of his son, may not have soured him, and turned the scale for evil in his subsequent career? When by the command of Augustus he divorced Agrippina, and married Julia, whose character and manners he detested, the grief he felt was poignant and sincere. Meeting Agrippina once by chance, he fixed his eyes on her with such an expression of love and sorrow, that infinite care was taken that they should never meet again. That one touch of humanity, that one look, pleads eloquently for the wretched Tiberius.

But for this single trait, Tiberius is described as an unmitigated monster. The history of the world does not present a more extraordinary political problem, than the abject submission of the Roman world during so many years to the savage despotism of a miserable old man, degraded by his vices, and hated for his cruelty. Yet, though complaining (gently, it is true, but still complaining), the Romans submitted, opened their veins and died,

were banished, or suffered confiscation, with the meekness of martyrs.

Fortune, rank, martial renown, virtue, were all especially marked out for attack ; the Emperor particularly objecting to every kind of pre-eminence. The information was laid, the witnesses called (imperial accusers, who under this reign reaped a golden harvest), and from that moment, innocent or guilty, the accused was abandoned as if he were plague-struck. There was no hope for him. The Empire was so vast that flight was impossible. History furnishes but one example of a man who escaped among the Parthians, and he was brought back again to Rome. Where could the wretched victim go ? Beyond the Roman Empire the world was a chaos, a fabulous region, inhabited by savages, whose very existence was a mystery. Who would harbour the enemy of the Emperor ? Not she who gave him birth. So it was best, after all, to stay quietly at home, and await the centurion's arrival, or summon a surgeon, and order a hot bath at once, if dying by his own sword, like Cato, required too much resolution for any but a philosopher. Such a reign of terror, unopposed and unchecked, can only be paralleled by the infatuation exercised by Robespierre, in our own times.

The secret of both periods, the solution of the state

enigma, was *fear*, cowardly, abject, miserable fear. Tiberius was afraid of the Senate, with its traditionary tendencies towards freedom and the republic ; the Senate feared Tiberius, as the legally established successor of deified Augustus, the *de facto* possessor of the vast power of the commonwealth ; and the people feared both Senate and Emperor, for to them, both were alike tyrannical. So blood flowed freely in the streets of Rome, whether from the republican proscriptions of Sylla or Marius, or the more legal butcheries of Tiberius. It was a wretched period ; distrust, suspicion, and terror prevailed everywhere ; most of all at court, where the all-powerful Emperor passed his life in trembling hesitation, afraid of giving an audience to a foreign ambassador, afraid of interrogating a prisoner, afraid of allowing the provincial governors, appointed by himself, to leave Rome, lest they should turn traitors by the way.

Augustus had at least ruled the world with a certain gracious magnanimity. Games, and festivals, and pompous ceremonials, external peace, and internal prosperity, had wreathed with flowers the chains which the citizen Emperor was forging for the annihilation of liberty ; but with Tiberius it was not so. He came of a hard, proud race, his manners were cold and repulsive, and

hypocrite as he was, he could never assume amiability. He gave no games to the people, he erected no public monuments, he hated gladiators and spectacles, and lived all his life, whether on the Palatine, or at Capri, like an ill-favoured wild beast, burrowing in his den. The wretched old man was only happy shut up in the little island of Capri, surrounded by his guards, with a soldier stationed on every rock, a fleet of vessels, ready manned, lying at anchor, and a regular system of telegraphic signals, so arranged as to enable him to summon at a moment's warning, the whole Prætorian camp from Rome. He was detested, he knew it, and he trembled at the senate, the army, the people, at his own friends, at his slaves, and above all at the very thought of his successor. Two several heirs apparent were sacrificed to his jealousy, the youthful Agrippa, and Germanicus, and he seemed only to acquiesce in the existence of Caligula, under the full conviction that he would rule the empire after his own barbarous notions of state policy.

The fears of Tiberius were prophetic, for by the hand of his successor he died; Caligula, that worthy youth who had stood by unmoved and beheld the murder of his entire race, father, mother, brothers, and sisters; finding that the old tyrant, though ill and in bed,

lingered inconveniently, assisted by Macron, the prefect of the Prætorian guards, threw an old mattress over his face and strangled him.

Under Caligula, the Augustan mansion on the Palatine, grew and multiplied into a proud palace-citadel. All affectation of republican simplicity, in manners, dress, or architecture, had vanished long ago. Vast sculptured colonnades of costly Lacedæmonian marble now surrounded the edifice, guarding its approaches from the *profanum vulgus*. The Emperor, half buffoon, half maniac, and entire barbarian, erected a temple near the palace, containing a golden statue of himself, which, served by a college of priests, and surrounded by ever-smoking altars, was dressed each day in robes, similar to those he himself wore. He had a perfect rage for acting the god. Succeeding Emperors waited at least for their death to become gods, but he must enjoy divine honours at once, without delay. Besides those customary titles of "most good," "most great," become now quite common, Caligula must be Hercules, with his club and skin, or Bacchus, or Castor, one of the great twin brethren. One day he appeared as Venus, another as Neptune with a trident. Sometimes he walked about the imperial halls of the Palatine dressed as Apollo, a crown of golden rays fastened round his head, and

accompanied by the Graces ; at other times he impersonated Mercury, and skipped along to the admiration of the courtiers, with little wings dangling about his feet ; but best of all he loved to be addressed as Latian Jove.

His strangest freak was stabling his horse Incitatus on the Palatine, in a mansion of marble, furnished with an ivory manger, coverlets of purple, and bridles set with jewels. Caligula also presented the animal with a palace and retinue, issued invitations in his name, and announced his intention of making him Consul. A decree was actually published commanding *Silence* around the palace while the horse slept. Such things seem scarcely credible.

Yet the accession of this Bedlamite—who, by aid of a strait-waistcoat and bread and water, might have been brought to his senses—was hailed by the entire Roman people with such paroxysms of frantic joy, that in three months a hundred and sixty thousand victims were sacrificed in his honour. To such a degree was public enthusiasm aroused in favour of the son of the beloved Germanicus, that, during a temporary illness, the *plebs* passed whole nights under the porticoes and about the courts of the palace, wildly exclaiming that they offered their heads, their lives, their children, their substance, in expiation to the gods, so that their beloved Caligula

might but be saved ! The unfortunate Romans came to their senses in time, however.

As Caligula extended his palace, he fetched from Greece fresh statues, monuments, and marbles to adorn his work. The mad-headed fool ! No sooner had the beauteous statues arrived, than, striking off their heads, he substituted his own graven image instead !

Within these sumptuous walls did this man, drunken with blood and lust, dressed in a silken petticoat, wearing sleeves and bracelets, and a helmet on his head, look out from the brow of the hill over imperial Rome, wishing "that the city had but one neck, which he might cut off at a blow ;" then, calling for his lictors, freedmen, and centurions, he would descend to the theatre, where he sometimes spent three successive days and nights without returning to the palace. During a time of temporary scarcity he visited the prisons himself, in order to select those captives who were to be thrown to the beasts, that the lions and tigers should at least not want for strong food while a man was living. "Kill them all," cried he, looking at the prisoners, "Kill them all, from one bald head to another !" On the Palatine he kept some of his victims confined in iron cages,—a hideous *menagerie* within the courts of his palace,—amusing himself each day by the sight of fresh tortures inflicted on

them, crying out the while, "Strike them so that they may feel death;" then, muttering to himself, he would add, "What matters their hate, if they do but fear me." Even during festive repasts he diverted himself by witnessing the dexterity with which a favourite centurion struck off the heads of some prisoners within the imperial banquetting hall, rendering all he did still more atrocious by the bitter sarcasm, the cold mocking cynicism of his words.

One of his eccentricities was the intense craving with which he was possessed to accomplish what had hitherto been deemed impossible—to give form and substance to each wild dream that coursed each other through his excited brain. He began his imperial career by appearing on the stage. A god *all day*, at *night* he astonished those senators who were summoned to the palace by gracefully floating towards them, attired in a tunic, and dancing to the soft tinkling of flutes and castanets. The senators, however, got accustomed to this kind of thing, and so far forgot their dignity as to tuck up their togas and run after the Emperor's chariot: they even descended into the arena, drove chariots, and sang and danced in imitation of deified Cæsar. But Caligula, by turns gladiator, orator, dancer, and charioteer, soon grew weary of these vulgar pursuits, in which any senator might eclipse him. Such pastimes were unworthy of a god. In future the

elements were to be conquered, the laws of nature disregarded. Bewildered at his boundless power, his weak brain turned, and he rushed forward in a still wilder career until his death. If he built a villa, it must stand in the midst of the sea; mountains must become plains, plains mountains, and nations must be conquered at a nod. He must drive across the Gulf of Baia, to and fro, in a chariot, dressed as for the circus, his glittering tunic flying in the breeze. To increase his amusement, at a given signal, the temporary bridge which had sustained him is submerged, that the Emperor standing on the shore may rejoice his wicked heart at the sight of thousands of spectators perishing in the waves. "Into the sea with them," he cries; "the festival is over, let the guests die."

Caligula, not content with his temple and worship, under the name of Jupiter Latialis, the image being dressed in his clothes, greatly scandalised the Romans by standing between the statues of the great twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, who, at the battle of Regillus, "fought so well for Rome." He affected also, with hideous jocularity, to hold secret conversations with his good friend and brother Jupiter Capitolinus, murmuring in the idol's ear, and presenting his own to receive the answer. Sometimes, indeed, he raved and stormed at Olympian

Jove, threatening without ceremony to send him packing into Greece ; then, after a while, pretending to be mollified by the pleadings of the deity, he forgave him.

At night, when the moon shone full and bright on the marble colonnades around the palace, Caligula, not satisfied with this sort of *thee* and *thou* familiarity with mighty Jupiter, degraded fair Dian herself in her crescent symbol by his amorous addresses, stretching out his arms towards the moon, and entreating her to descend and commune with him. So proud, indeed, was he of this supposed *liaison*—very appropriate, by the way, for a lunatic—that he was in the habit of calling on his sycophant and favourite, Vitellius, to substantiate the fact. Vitellius, with ingenious flattery, replying to the Emperor's appeal, "That when the gods were in conjunction they were invisible to mortal eyes."

When Antonia, his grandmother, shocked at his excesses, ventured to remonstrate with him, he replied, "Know that to me all is permitted."

The vast treasures accumulated by the penurious Tiberius were soon lavished by this insane prodigal, whose vast erections on the Palatine were the least portion of his expenditure. He constructed baths of surpassing magnificence, in which he was perfumed with

hot essences many times a day. In imitation of the Egyptian Cleopatra, he swallowed pearls of inestimable value, after dissolving them in vinegar. He distributed to his guests food and bread formed of gold, and from the summit of the Julian Basilica, flung handfuls of money among the populace. Anon, his mood shifted, he publicly announced his poverty, asked his courtiers for New Year's gifts, and, standing in the vestibule of the imperial palace, solicited presents from the passers-by ! Tired of this degrading pastime, he caused the floors of his largest halls to be strewed with ingots of gold and jewels, upon which he flung himself at full length, rejoicing in the treasure he possessed. Such scenes has the Palatine beheld !

A lively picture has been left by Philo of imperial life in his day. The Jews had refused to admit Caligula's statue within the Holy of Holies, in the Temple at Jerusalem. They implored Petronius, the Roman governor, to intercede with the Emperor for the revocation of this impious demand, and Petronius, touched by their prayers, arranged that a deputation of the noblest Jews should wait on Caligula and plead their own cause. Arrived in Italy, the deputation had all the trouble in the world to find the Emperor. He was rushing about in Campania from villa to villa ; at last he gave them

a rendezvous at Rome. The Jews stared with astonishment at the marble arcades, the Grecian statues, golden vases, and gorgeous paintings, that adorned the palace halls; the gardens were glorious, the porticoes magnificent. As they traversed the splendid apartments, they came suddenly on a tall, ill-proportioned man, with small eyes, stern brows, very little hair, and a long beard. He was standing between an actor and a steward of the palace, and was dressed in such an extraordinary manner as to leave it doubtful what particular divinity, whether male or female, he meant to represent. The Jews, in a terrible fright, prostrated themselves on the ground. "Hail, Emperor and Augustus," murmured they, with trembling voices. "These then, are the men," cried Caligula, turning round, "who adore an unknown God. These are the impious fellows, enemies of gods and men, who refuse to worship me." "No, Cæsar," replied the Jews, "we love you, we sacrifice hecatombs in your honour, victims are slain, and blood flows freely upon our altars, and when you, Imperial Cæsar, recovered from that terrible malady, we offered up abundant prayers for your welfare, and united our joy to the joy of the universe." "Yes," replied Caligula, "you sacrificed, but to another God, not to me; you did *me* no honour." Then he rushed off into another room, gave his directions to alter

this statue, and that picture, leaving the poor Jews to follow in fear and suspense. All at once the Emperor turned round again. "Why do you Jews not eat pork?" said he, looking quite grave. The attendants could scarcely forbear from laughing ; but the deputation, in no merry mood, gravely explained their reasons. "You are in the right," replied Caligula, "'tis a nasty meat." At length, after some more talk, and running in and out of more rooms, he dismissed them, saying, "Now you may go. You seem to me more mad than wicked in not acknowledging me as God."

But the hour came at last, when Rome cut off this monster in his prime. The very night before his murder he danced on the stage. But, to insure his safety, for his approaching fate seemed partially revealed to him, he caused three senators of consular rank to be summoned to the palace. Having placed them in the front row, he made his appearance, and danced to the sound of trumpets and military music. The next day, awaking from a drunken slumber at a late hour, he fell under the avenging sword of Chærea whilst traversing the galleries of the palace, and breathed out his vile life within the walls he had so long polluted.

If Augustus was a hypocrite, Tiberius a butcher, and Caligula a madman, Claudius was certainly an idiot.

He had been all his life so debased and humiliated, so constantly assured that he was a fool, and treated like one, that he ended by losing the little sense he originally possessed. Thus the Empire passed from the hands of a maniac into those of a fool, yet the infatuated people and the Senate meekly submitted. With all his stupidity, there was a degree of *bonhomie* about Claudius that made his reign a kind of breathing space between the horrors committed by Caligula and Nero. How he came to be made emperor is too amusing, and too nearly connected with the domestic history of the Palatine, to be omitted. At first the Senate would not believe that Caligula was dead ; they looked on the news as a mere trick imagined by himself to try their fidelity, and every soul held his tongue, and stayed at home. At length, however, a herald appeared in the circus, and before the assembled multitude formally announced his decease. Then the Senate assembled in haste, and talked loudly of the re-establishment of the Republic ; liberty was the watchword, the memory of Caligula was denounced, and the very name and monuments of all the emperors were to be abolished. This was one act of the drama.

In the meantime the Prætorian guards held their council also. They cared little for Caligula, but they cared much

for the emperors generally, who clothed and fed and rewarded them. Under a republic they would be no more considered than the common legionaries, and they grew alarmed. While holding their council of war, these worthy Prætorians pillaged the imperial palace; it was a moment of general confusion, and the people also came up to the Palatine and assisted them. Every apartment was opened and examined, every corner ransacked; there are no penetralia for robbers. At last, after pillaging all the lower part of the palace, they came upon an obscure upper corridor, where, behind a curtain, a pair of sandaled feet were visible. A Prætorian soldier, Gratus by name, laid hold of the feet and pulled them forwards. The feet belonged to a man, who, trembling and white with terror, flung himself upon his knees before the soldier imploring his mercy. Gratus recognised the suppliant as Tiberius Claudius, uncle of Caligula, and, seized by some strange inspiration, not only granted him his life, but, straightway raising him up, prostrated himself before him and proclaimed him Emperor. The other Prætorians came up, saw Claudius, heard the shouts of Gratus, who, determined not to do the thing by halves, screamed with all his lungs, and entirely approved his choice; so the ridiculous Claudius, the laughing-stock and butt of the imperial family, was

proclaimed Emperor, and carried down to the Forum in a litter (for he was still so frightened he could not be got to walk), where the conscript fathers, terrified at the soldiers, very soon left off talking of republicanism and liberty, and dutifully accepted him as their Emperor. Then the Prætorians, who seem to have been afraid their protégé would run away if left to himself, carried him back, and fairly installed him within the walls of the Palatine.

Those walls, those ancient tottering walls, where one stone scarce clings to another but for the tangled mesh of ivy that enshrouds them, those gloomy cavernous grottoes, those deep down vaults, those ruined porticoes and temples, what hideous bacchanals, what splendour, glory, vice, folly, pollution, havoc, and blood, have they not witnessed! If each particular stone had a brazen tongue, and could speak, never surely would their chronicles, accumulated through long centuries, be exhausted. Strange wondrous walls, gazing down so grimly on the world beneath, a curse of blackness and gloom and crime hangs on ye! How often have ye echoed to the cries of despair, to the last shriek of agony, the boisterous roars of drunken revellers, or to the soft whispers of venal love!

The imperial palace on the Palatine stood outwardly

fair and glorious to behold ; Cæsar after Cæsar decorated, enlarged, and adorned it. Baths for the use of the Court, and the Lararium or private Temple-chapel, appeared conspicuous in the façade. Alexander Severus has made this same Lararium famous, by placing among the effigies of the deified Cæsars, gods, and celebrated men, a statue of Christ, together with one of Abraham, and of *Orpheus*, to each of whom he offered sacrifice every morning. Strange, that the same mind that could so oddly jumble the worship of the shepherd-son of Jupiter and Calliope with the Saviour, should cause to be inscribed on one of the façades of the imperial abode, that sentence so expressive of the very spirit of Christianity ; “Do unto others as you would be done by.” While these letters shone in golden characters on the exterior of the palace of the Cæsars, within doors, the Emperor Alexander proclaimed the superiority of the philosophic code of the Christians over all others.

Then Heliogabalus came from the East, with his sun worship and mysticism, Asiatic debauchery and luxury, and raised his famous tower on a pavement of precious stones, intended as a royal scaffold or funeral pile, so that by casting himself from its summit he might fall on jewels, and pompously break his skull as became an Emperor. “*Even my death shall be mag-*

nificent," said the Eastern despot. But I will not anticipate.

In the course of time, the immense Tiberian Library, and more halls and chambers, lined with gold, ivory, marbles, and diamonds, and hung with purple and embroidered tapestries, were added, in which, shrouded from public gaze, those incredible scenes forming the day by day life of the Cæsars, were enacted. Around the palace uprose an enclosure of temples, dedicated to men and deities; the shrine of Jupiter Sator (where the bronze wolf was preserved); that of the Bona Dea, famous among the Roman dames, and infamous to the world by its secret rites, at which they assisted veiled; the Sacrarium, devoted to the Salian priests of Numa, who, at his festival, ran through the streets dancing, and sounding brazen shields in honour of Mars; and the temple of Apollo, a deity especially honoured by Augustus, whose son he loved to be called. This temple was remarkable for its gigantic statue of the god, before which the poets recited their verses, and whose pedestal long served as the depository of the Sibylline books before their removal to the Capitol.

Joined to the temple of Apollo (where the sister and mother of the god were also honoured), was the library where Augustus, in his old age, loved to receive

his friends and courtiers, and where he so far forgot his humble citizen pretensions, as to summon the Senate to attend him. Augustus was honoured after his Apotheosis, on the Palatine, in a sumptuous shrine, erected by Livia and Tiberius; the names of Drusus, Claudius, Tiberius, and Germanicus, as well as the most eminent senators, figuring among the priesthood of this new worship.

Caligula was adored at an altar erected by himself. Claudius deified his grandmother Livia, placing her statue beside that of Augustus. At length, indeed, every successive Cæsar came to be adored in this second Pantheon, the centre of imperial power.

But amidst the various temples raised to Bacchus, to the Moon, to Priapus, to the goddess Viriplaca, peacemaker in conjugal disputes (a goddess whose power at Rome, either in ancient or in modern times, has been always extremely limited), even to the presiding deity of *Fever*, that crowded the summit of the Imperial mount, with Peristyles, courts, arcades, and porticoes, over which waved sacred groves—nothing could compare to the wondrous pile, erected by “that imperial lump of mud” Nero, after the conflagration of Rome, in which the Palace of the Cæsars perished. Until his reign, the deified monsters who sowed Rome

with blood, and peopled it with crimes, had been satisfied with half the surface of the hill, but he, with incredible rapidity linked his Golden Palace to the distant Esquiline, embracing the entire Palatine and Cælian hills, with the intervening valleys, from the Great Circus, to where now stands the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore, within its fabulous extent.

If the senators were lodged like princes, what was magnificent enough for Cæsar? Nero gloried in a scandalous profusion, an abuse of unlimited power, revolting even to the degraded Romans themselves. Augustus might live in a humble abode, and affect the citizen, but *he* would blaze forth in all the glories of his lofty rank, he would teach the world the real type of a Roman Emperor. What an Emperor *could* be, was to be shown during the thirteen years of Nero's reign; that worthy son of the brutal Domitian and the infamous Agrippina, of whom his own father had said, "What but evil can be born of us?"

The vestibule of the Golden House embraced a triple range of columns; the clients of Cæsar, who wait there each morning by thousands, are but as little specks in the vast space. The gilded walls are so lofty, that the colossal statue of the Emperor, one hundred and twenty feet high, that statue which afterwards gave

its name to the Colosseum, stands in the centre without any difficulty. Porticoes a mile in length open out from this glorious hall resplendent with purple and gold ; they too are supported on triple ranges of marble pillars of every delicate tint. There are lakes, and woods, and forests, blending with chambers lined with gold, jewels, and mother-of-pearl ; ivory roofs perforated to scatter perfumes and flowers. on Cæsar's guests, and moveable floors that vanish like magic, to re-appear piled with sumptuous banquets. There are temples, beautiful as fairy palaces, formed of a transparent roseate marble reflecting the sun's rays like a diamond ; there are subterranean galleries and halls for the heat of summer, painted in such elaborate frescoes that whole lives have been spent in their adornment ; there are alabaster baths supplied with water from the sea, and there are others filled with sulphureous streams from Albula. Those brave surveyors Severus and Celer have laboured well ; even Nero is satisfied : " Now," says he, " I feel I am lodged like a man."

All Greece was beggared to furnish statues, paintings, bronzes, and marbles, to decorate his abode. (Nero takes a journey there and assures himself that the best of everything has been carried to his Golden House.) The very universe itself has been exhausted to adorn

the gigantic monument it has pleased this abominable matricide to erect, and to furnish riches, food, raiment, and amusement, for his entertainment. And how does the master of the world spend his time? Like all wicked emperors he begins his reign well, no blood is to be shed even in the Circus, which is a thing incredible after the sanguinary spectacles in which Caligula delighted. There were no accusations, no suicides. Trajan, that really good emperor, could only hope that his whole reign might equal in prosperity the first days of Nero's government. In those early days Agrippina exercised a mother's influence, and there was the stoical Seneca with lessons of eloquence and mercy, and Burrhus, the loyal soldier and upright man, perpetually talking virtue. But this worthy trio could not agree, each wanted to rule: Agrippina entreated Nero not to sacrifice himself to philosophy, Seneca exhorted him to "Respect his mother, but to be Emperor." Burrhus would fain have led his mind to consider military popularity as the climax of imperial power; and there were depraved slaves and freedmen, and chamberlains by thousands, who taught the still easier lesson "that the indulgence of the passions was the only true good."

Nero's feeble head was soon bewildered; he was at best but an artistic imbecile. As he became conscious

of his own power he grew weary of so many teachers and determined to rule alone, so breaking loose all at once, he paid a visit to Locusta, the *Brinvilliers* of Rome, and provided himself with a deadly poison. Poor Britannicus was his first victim, and then once started Agrippina followed,* and Seneca, and all and every one whom it suited his cruel humour to destroy.

How then does the master of the world spend his time within his wondrous palace? In the gardens there is a circus where he drives, dressed in his favourite green livery, before a select audience; but the people press in at the doors, and demand so loudly to be allowed to see the fun, that at last they too are admitted. Then he has a theatre, where he sings for his friends surrounded by a whole cortege of courtiers, who fall into extasies at the very sound of his divine voice. A senator of consular rank hands him his lyre, a consul announces the performance, and begs the indulgence of the public in favour of the royal *débutant*, a chorus of Roman senators fill up the pauses (how are the mighty fallen!)—others ride on elephants, or play the flute, or attired in a short tunic descend into the arena as gladiators and buffoons—The grave Burrhus himself takes part in the performance. The philosophic

* Agrippina survived this attempt, to perish by assassination.

Thrasea condescends to assist, and a certain Elia Catulla, who certainly ought to have known better, dances on the stage at eighty years of age. After the theatre Nero has many engagements ; he may be bound for the Milvian bridge, to play *Scaramuccia*, with all the Roman roués who meet there every evening. Or perhaps he is going to witness a night performance at Caligula's Circus under the Vatican hills. It will be a brilliant spectacle, for the condemned Christians, those people who hate both gods and men, dressed in inflammable tunics and elevated on poles, are to light up the vast arena with their burning bodies ;—an ingenious punishment devised by the Emperor, which adds much to the diversions of the evening.

When Nero at length retires to the penetralia of the palace, executions, gladiators, comedians, banquets, and orgies await his leisure. Here is Senecion his low companion in the riots at the Milvian bridge, and Paris the comedian, and Poppæa his mistress, and the shoemaker Felicion, court jester *par excellence*, Vatinius the hunchback, Otho the future emperor a classical dandy, Tigellinus the prætorian prefect, and a hundred other profligate and depraved companions, all ministering in different ways to his vices. In the midst of this goodly company sits, or rather lounges Nero himself, fat, flabby, and ill-favoured,

a hideous object, with a thick neck, discoloured skin, small greenish eyes, irregular features, his hair in disorder, slippers on his feet, and wearing a long garment embroidered with flowers. Such is imperial life within the Golden House, and thus the Emperor passes his time on the Palatine.

Nero fell execrated by mankind, and the very form and fashion of his Golden House was torn stone from stone by an outraged people, who never rested until all that remained was imbedded in earth and stones, to serve as a foundation for the baths of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre.

A report long existed that Nero was not dead, and during twenty years false Neros continually appeared heading various petty revolutions in different parts of the Empire ; but at last it became plain to all that he had really perished in the manner related by Tacitus. The dynasty of the Cæsars was ended, the Julii, the Octavii, the Claudii, and the *gens* Domitii, had all passed to their long home within the marble walls of the Mausoleum, in the Campus Martius. Murder, death, and war had done their work ; and spite of imperial adoptions and innumerable marriages and divorces, not a legitimate descendant of these mighty names remained. The same fatality attended the noble races allied by marriage with the

Cæsars; the Marcelli became extinct in the person of the youth so pathetically lamented by Virgil; the sons of Agrippa died young; the Silani perished by the hands of executioners, and the Antonines, the descendants of the triumvir, the friend of Julius Cæsar, died out in exile. On the Palatine grew a tufted grove of laurel planted by Livia, where each successive emperor gathered a garland for his triumph, at the same time planting a fresh sprig as commemorative of his reign. It is said that at the death of each emperor the laurel tree he had planted withered away. When Nero fell the entire grove perished; a violent storm broke the heads of every imperial statue within the city, and displaced the marble sceptre in the hand of Augustus.

The imperial *gourmand* Vitellius has left recollections of his death connected with the Palatine. In order to avoid the vengeance of Vespasian, who had advanced close to the walls of Rome, Vitellius endeavoured to escape into the Campania by the Aventine, but finding every outlet closed, he reluctantly returned to the palace. It was forsaken, not a sound broke the silence of its vast halls; the courtiers, in all ages a fawning multitude, had hastened to salute the victorious Vespasian. Even those who by necessity remained, hid themselves from the sight of the fallen Emperor. Profiting by this solitude he con-

cealed a quantity of gold pieces in his girdle, and hid himself in the porter's lodge, the *Cella*, beside the dogs, kept there to guard the entrance. One dog he placed before the door, which he barricaded with a mattress. Thus concealed he awaited his fate. Nor did he remain long in suspense. Runners from the army had already entered the city. They searched every corner within the imperial palace, but in vain; Vitellius was not to be found. At last the *Cella* was remembered; they broke open the door, and found within a meanly dressed man, of whom they inquired "If he knew where Vitellius lay concealed?" At first by a lie he endeavoured to mislead them, but ere long he was recognised, and dragged half clothed along the Sacred Way into the Forum, where, after enduring horrid cruelties, his body was flung into the Tiber.

With the reign of Vespasian, a man of austere temper, and somewhat parsimonious in his habits, began a new era. It was then that the public dared to express the loathing and disgust with which the name of Nero was remembered, and as the Emperor's frugal disposition coincided with popular opinion, the Imperial Palace was reduced to the ancient limits of the Palatine. Titus followed in his father's footsteps. But Domitian, that man of brick and stone, alike tyrant and butcher, emulous of Nero's crimes, again enlarged the Augustan abode and added the Gardens of

Adonis, whose very name betrays the excesses to which they were devoted. I find nothing during Domitian's reign particularly connected with the Palatine. There is the same weary catalogue of cruelty and vice, unrelieved by the artistic sympathies of Nero, or the amusing extravagances of Caligula. Domitian was a dull heavy tyrant not even diverting in his excesses, as stupid and senseless as the flies with whom he spent his weary hours. He died within the palace : stabbed while reading a letter.

Of the five good emperors who succeeded him, I have nothing to record ; it was the bad alone who left their memories engraven on the imperial mount. Trajan employed himself in the decoration of his own Forum, or was engaged in constant warfare ; Adrian immortalised his name as an architect, by the creation of that superb temple dedicated to Venus and Rome, of which a few mouldering arches yet remain ; Marcus Aurelius was engaged in constant wars. At the opening of his third campaign, seized with the plague at Vienna, he died, filled with prophetic fears for the welfare of the state, caused by the premature wickedness of his son and successor Commodus.

Herodian has left a vivid account of the first arrival of Commodus at the imperial palace. Left by the death of his father, Marcus Aurelius, while yet a youth, at the head

of the imperial forces in Hungary where a fierce war was then raging, he became so impatient to enjoy the delights of the capital, that he fairly ran away and abandoned the army to its fate. At Rome he was received with rapture by the Senate and the people. The entire city turned out to meet him, each man crowned with laurel; flowers were scattered in his path, and every citizen pressed forward to behold a prince endeared by the memory of his father's virtues. He had been born and educated among them, and the citizens could not foresee that they had been nourishing a monster in their bosom, who would shortly show himself only a degree less mad, and quite as wicked as Caligula. But in the meantime Commodus, in the flower of youth, looked transcendent: his fine features, soft yet sparkling eyes, and flowing locks, that hung about his shoulders like a mantle of gold literally sparkling in the sun's light, gave him the appearance of a divinity (the comparison is Herodian's, not mine). The Romans, continues that historian, could not admire or gaze at him enough; every one wishing him happiness, invoking blessings on him, and casting crowns and flowers on his path. After he had visited the temples of Jove and the other deities, and thanked the Senate and the prætorian guards for their devotion, he went up to inhabit the palace on the Palatine. The ancient palace

and the new guest were, however, not fated long to be united. While his presence darkened those sumptuous halls, crime, and luxury, and wickedness were rife. It was the old, old story: there was a moral contagion within those walls that infected each successive emperor, save one or two here and there, few and far between.

At length, weary of his misdeeds, one of his courtiers, instigated by his sister, attempted to assassinate him in the Colosseum, and failed. The horrors of cruelty Commodus committed after this escape were incredible. He was as fond of killing men and animals as Nero or Domitian, and emulated them both as a charioteer and gladiator; notwithstanding which histrionic propensities he insisted on dropping his family name and calling himself Hercules, son of Jupiter. From this time he might be seen, like Caligula, traversing the stately porticoes of the palace dressed "*in character*," with a lion's skin cast over one shoulder and brandishing a club in his hand.

The Saturnalian games were about to be celebrated, and Commodus, determined to enjoy his Saturnalia in his own mad way, announced his intention of quitting the Palatine, going down to the gladiators' quarters, and escorted by them scouring the city in search of adventures. Marzia, his favourite mistress, warmly opposed this frantic

project, but in vain. Commodus calling two of his attendants ordered that rooms should be prepared for him in the gladiatorial school. These attendants or chamberlains, or whatever they might be called, also endeavoured to persuade him against this most unroyal prank ; but all they gained for their pains was to be kicked out of the room by Hercules, who then retired into his own apartment in high sulks to sleep. So enraged was the Emperor-god at the opposition he had encountered, that before lying down to rest he drew from his bosom a small note-book, and entered the names both of Marzia and of the chamberlains as well as numerous senators, to be killed that very night while he was out with the gladiators.

A little page chanced to enter the room when he was asleep, and seeing a book lying beside him picked it up and carried it to Marzia. She thinking it might be of consequence, coaxed the child to give it up to her, and once having it in her possession, like a real woman and true daughter of Eve, is seized with a raging curiosity to know the contents. To her horror and astonishment she finds within a list of the murders to be committed that very night, and her own name at the top of the page !

We are taught, even by beasts, that self-preservation is the first principle of our nature ; both men and animals are alike in this particular. Marzia, evidently a strong-

mind woman, reasoned very justly that if Commodus lived she must die, and *vice versâ*. More blood is to fall within those awful walls, another ghost to be added to the shadowy throng that haunt the imperial threshold.

Herodian makes Marzia speak a very pretty little monologue, more dramatic than probable ; then sending for the chamberlains she shows them their names inscribed in the book of death, and calls upon them to draw their daggers and dip them in the royal blood. But poison is ultimately determined on as the surest and most easy mode of destruction. In the meantime, Commodus, full of his project of visiting the gladiators, his most dear cronies, and quite excited at the thought of the murders to be committed, wakes up and goes to the bath ; on coming out, being thirsty, he is presented by Marzia with the poisoned cup which he drains. The poison inclines him to sleep, and Marzia, under the pretext of not disturbing his slumbers, orders every one out of the way, a proceeding which excites no suspicion, as the Emperor is given to long slumbers.

The palace is in deep repose—not a sound wakes the echoes of the endless colonnades. Commodus, it would seem, is wrapt in that last long sleep from which there is no awakening ; at least so hopes Marzia, who is there watching with the chamberlains. Not in the least ;

Commodus wakes, and by an effort of nature, is relieved of the poison, but still weak and stupified reposes on his couch.

Then Marzia, seeing that *one* must die, and determined not to be that one, induces a certain Narcissus, by promises of immense rewards, to strangle the suffering Hercules as he lay in his bed. And so died Commodus, "the handsomest man," says Herodian, "of his age, and unequalled in strength, and in the skill with which he could fling an arrow."

So many murders happen on the Palatine it seems no better than a royal Gemonia ! No wonder that nothing living prospers on a soil stained with such rivers of human blood ! Commodus being dead, his body, wrapt up in rags is carried out of the palace and thrown into the river, while Marzia and the chamberlains, the *Deus ex machina* of the plot, assemble in secret conclave to appoint a successor before his death became public. They choose Pertinax, a man of mature years and sober judgment, who had distinguished himself in the wars against the Germans, and been honoured by the friendship of the excellent Marcus Aurelius.

At midnight the industrious chamberlains leave the palace, creeping down the steep slope so that none might perceive them. When arrived at the house of

Pertinax they found all shut up, and the porter, and the dogs his companions, asleep. After a great deal of knocking they were admitted, the porter running straight to inform Pertinax of their arrival, who believed nothing less than that they were the executioners of Commodus come to murder him. It was but a prescience of his coming fate, only the good soldier mistook the locality. Under the full impression that instant death awaited him, he received the chamberlains with the most stately politeness, and history has even invented an eloquent harangue for the occasion, which concluded by begging them not to make a fool of him. However, when he sees the little note-book which belonged to Commodus, and hears that he is dead, he makes no sort of opposition to their plans for his aggrandizement, and very willingly accompanies them back to the fatal Palatine. Poor Pertinax, he had much better have staid at home, for the blood shed on that dread threshold clings to his garment as he enters. Nemesis is at the door to meet him, though she is invisible.

The new Emperor was a reformer, a dangerous character at all times, especially at Rome, either in ancient or modern days. His reforms pleased the Senate, a kind of feeble Greek chorus that maundered about virtue and patriotism, to whom nobody listened ;

but they displeased the Prætorian guards, become now the executive government ever since the day that the election of Galba, created Emperor by the voice of the soldiers alone without any regard to the concurrence of the Senate—taught them the boundless power they possessed.

The Prætorians, highly indignant at the tranquil aspect of public affairs, and missing the feasts, the carouses, and the license of the late Emperor, in a drunken frolic determine over their cups to make away with the good man who lives so respectably in the foul palace. No sooner is the deed decided on than it is executed. They rush tumultuously to the Palatine, and with furious haste assault the royal abode; the terrified domestics fly, a general *sauve qui peut* takes place, and Pertinax, who stoutly refuses even to conceal himself, is left alone. There is something of the spirit of the ancient Roman in him, but these were no times for its display. Finding that the raging troops are approaching, he leaves his apartment, and with quiet dignity advances to meet them, calmly asking the reason of their sudden attack. Receiving no satisfactory reply, and being, if history be true, as fond of speechifying as the heroine of a French tragedy, he makes them a long oration, its object being to persuade them that his death will not benefit them in

the least. They, being of a contrary opinion, fall upon him as soon as he has ceased speaking, and kill him. So another ghost is added to the awful procession that glide through those dread halls. It must have been consoling, however, to his wandering spirit to know that Severus punished the unmanly wretches, his assassins.

During the short reign of Commodus, the Palatine was much injured by the same conflagration that destroyed the Temple of Peace, when flames burst from the earth in the most mysterious and unaccountable manner. The ruined portions of the imperial palace were restored by Septimus Severus the all-conquering African, who also erected new buildings on the eastern summit of the hill, where now stands the church of San Buonaventura. He also constructed a superb edifice, the *Septizonium*, near the *Clivus Scauri*, opposite Mount Cælius, adorned with seven porticoes, raised terrace-ways above each other, supported by seven ranges of columns of the finest marble, each differing in form, the whole edifice rising to a prodigious height. This building served as an entrance, or portal, to the Palatine, on the side of the Cælian hill.

The name of Severus stands honourably distinguished among the dreary catalogue of imperial monsters that occupied the throne. Constantly engaged in distant

wars, he spent but little time in Rome, only returning from time to time to the Palatine. The close of his reign was darkened by the unnatural dissensions between his sons Geta and Caracalla. Already did their father's life appear to these wicked youths too long; their impatience to reign could not brook the slow progress of natural decay. Caracalla actually commanded the physicians who attended Severus to hasten his death by poison, which they refusing to do, incurred his signal displeasure. His very first act as Emperor was to order their execution.

Then the Palatine saw a strange sight. Two Emperors ruled within the palace walls, equal in power; brothers, yet mortal enemies. The deadly infection of wickedness was again at work, and the evil spirits that haunted these royal precincts rejoiced. The palace was divided between Geta and Caracalla, each living in constant terror of the other, and scarcely daring to eat for fear of poison. Hate, fear, ambition, suspicion, raged within their breasts. No sooner were the ashes of their father consigned to the Augustan monument, than they would have poisoned the very breezes that came laden with summer perfumes from the breezy Campagna, so that they might slay each other. The edifying example of the princes was zealously followed by their several

courts ; Pandora was the only deity whose worship was then remembered on the Palatine, and there her box was always open. Geta was of a softer and more amiable disposition than Caracalla, who, from his earliest youth was remarkable for low and brutal manners, and ferocious propensities. At last, both princes growing weary of this uneasy life, determined to divide the Empire. Europe was to belong to Caracalla, and Asia to Geta. Their mother Julia, who lived with them in the palace, and did her best, poor soul, to mitigate their hatred, was present while these two "*Cains*" made this arrangement. She was in despair as she sat and listened, for wicked as they were, both were her sons, and she loved them. At length, overcome by contending emotions, she rose and spoke,—

"You my sons have indeed, as I hear, divided the earth and the sea between you. It is well ; let the ocean part the several continents you inhabit, and end your jealousies. But have you considered how you will divide your wretched mother?—she who bore you both? Have you considered where, and how, her miserable existence is to be passed? Divide me with your swords, slay me, take each half, and bury me in the lands you may select, so that at least my ashes may mix with the soil you inhabit, and we may be united even in death."

Then, with tears and sobs, and inexpressible sorrow, the miserable Julia folded her sons in her arms, conjuring them to be reconciled, and to live united. But it would have been easier to "heap Pelion upon Ossa," than persuade those fiery spirits to peace. At the moment, her maternal grief powerfully affected them, and they returned to their several palaces without further discussion of the proposed scheme of division. Fresh discord soon broke out however, and Caracalla, swelling with savage hatred, and weary of any bridle to his insatiable thirst of power, determined to snatch by open violence what treachery had failed to accomplish, and to rid himself by one bold stroke of his brother's presence. Geta was in his mother's apartments when Caracalla burst into the room sword in hand, and falling on the ill-fated youth, pierced him to the heart, his blood deluging the unhappy Julia, in whose arms he lay. Then rushing through the palace like a demoniac, Caracalla loudly declared that he had just escaped from mortal peril, that his brother had attempted his life, and that being no longer safe in the palace, he entreated the Prætorians to conduct him to their camp. Afterwards he also fell by the hands of an assassin, but not within the walls of the Palatine.

The effeminate Heliogabalus, besides a jewelled tower,

added baths and a gorgeous temple, dedicated to the Sun, to the already overgrown palace. A new phase of folly and vice commenced with his reign, and Rome and the Senate were called upon to show still greater proofs of their servile subjection. Héliogabalus, attired as priest of the Sun in the pontifical garments of purple and gold, covered with necklaces, amulets, and jewels, celebrated the rites of his deity within the temple he had built. This was a new spectacle for the grim old walls to witness. Each morning the altars blazed with costly sacrifices ; hundreds of oxen and sheep were slain, and rivers of the rarest wines ran around the shrine. The degenerate Emperor, accompanied by a bevy of the fairest Phœnician damsels, appeared, and danced in “Lydian measures” before the Senate and the knights. Generals, tribunes, and consuls were forced to take part in these ceremonies, and to bear the sacred vessels on their heads, dressed in the Phœnician habit.

Heliogabalus caused the sacred Palladium, that much prized talisman of Roman power which had never before left the Temple of Vesta except during the occupation of the city by the Goths, to be transported to the Palatine. Even the Vestals themselves were not respected by this audacious Sybarite. The espousals of the Sun and Moon gave occasion to the most splendid

festivals all over Italy. On this occasion Heliogabalus transported the image of his god in a golden chariot driven by himself, the roads along which he passed being strewed with gold. But time and patience fail in recounting, however briefly, the follies of a youth who named a ballet-dancer generalissimo of the army, and raised three comedians to the rank of senators. At length the soldiers, who now, be it observed, always take the place of the Senate in regulating the affairs of state, tired of his effeminate extravagances, fell upon him in the palace and killed him. Thus another corpse is added to the imperial charnel-house, and more blood flows on the sombre Palatine.

Sad and sombre indeed are the chronicles of the imperial mount. It is recorded by Justus Lipsius in the genealogy of the Cæsars, that among forty-three emperors, thirty-two died violent deaths. No Cæsar died without either a crime, or the suspicion of a crime; even the well-beloved Livia, the cherished wife of Augustus, is accused of having hastened his death by poison, to make room for her son Tiberius. The daughter and the granddaughter of Augustus died in exile, Tiberius was poisoned by Sejanus, his grandson and granddaughter murdered by Caligula, whose own daughter was in her turn butchered at two years old;

and the three children of Claudius—Octavia, Antonina, and Britannicus—were assassinated by Nero, their adopted brother. The fate of those unhappy ladies selected by the emperors to be their wives was equally unfortunate. Of sixteen empresses, wives of the heirs of the first Cæsars, six died violent deaths, seven were divorced; three only escaping execution or divorce. Such are the melancholy statistics of the Palatine.

Centuries have rolled by, and the palace of the Cæsars, successively adorned, decorated and increased during so many ages, now verged towards its fall. Constantine, by carrying off many of the accumulated riches and treasures it contained to his "new Rome," Byzantium, began that destruction which was to be completed by the Goths under Alaric, and by the Vandals under Genseric in the fifth century. Theodoric indeed, partially attempted to restore the palace; but after his death, its stately walls were utterly abandoned; grass and weeds grew in the porticoes, the shrines were deserted, the arcades desolate, the temples fell into ruins, and the bat and the owl, the grasshopper and the lizard, held high holiday on the mosaic floors, and along the painted walls, where the world's masters had so long dwelt.

And now what remains? An inarticulate heap of blackening ruins; stables for mules, granaries for hay,

a cabbage garden, a vineyard, a tuft of dark ilex trees marking the spot where once stood the sacred grove ; an old crone, that, like the deified Livia, knits and spins as she points with her bony finger towards some yawning chasm, and tells you "*To beware!*" And, worst of all, an impertinent modern house, with red walls and staring windows looking insolently down upon the mighty chaos of the past. *Sic transit gloria mundi.* The cobwebs on the Palatine would content Heliogabalus *now* ; his slaves might find more than ten thousand pounds weight clinging to the tottering walls. But there is none to gather them ; not a sound, not a murmur, disturbs the ominous solitude save the melancholy chirrup of the *cicala*, or the sighing of the wind as it sweeps across the desolate Campagna, stretching far away in waving undulations to meet the billowy ocean.





PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF THE CÆSARS.

AS in the knowledge of unseen lands, however graphic may have been the details furnished by the author we grope as it were in darkness,—a darkness which one glance over the reality of hill and vale, city and village, cathedral or palace, removes in an instant;—so in considering the lives of those great emperors—landmarks of the past,—one glance at the *statue-portraits* which have come down to us, individualises them more than even the descriptions of Suetonius, brutal as he is in cynical frankness.

Gazing at these sculptured portraits, idealised though they may in truth be, we look upon the man himself. We can decide for ourselves what he was, or what he was not; we can probe the doubtful parts of his history, we can approach him, the great emperor, the renowned general, the accomplished statesman, consider each line, trace every turn of his counte-

nance, and form a complete opinion of our own, how far history has, or has not, represented him truly to us. For, be it remembered, in these far-off times when political hatred ran so high, and ambition and the spirit of party were so furious, power so absolute, adulation so excessive, and the fear of death ever present,—when no constitutional laws defended the subject, no fear of national opinion swayed despots like the Cæsars,—we must accept all history with a certain reserve, and feel even in studying Tacitus, Cicero, Suetonius, Horace, and Juvenal, that we are in the presence of personal prejudices, personal sense of wrong, personal flattery, or personal apprehension, as the case may be. This is a subject on which much remains to be written. I only touch upon what might become a vast theme, in order to preface a few remarks upon what I may call the *physiognomistic* history of the past.

Doubtless imperial portraiture—as we see it in the Vatican, in the Capitol, in the Uffizi, in the Museo Borbonico at Naples—may be idealized to a certain extent. A man may, under the treatment of a skilful artist—a cunning Greek, or of a Roman, pupil of a Greek—become a hero, and fine features and a noble presence be sublimated into a god. But not even the flattering hand of a sychophant

could alter the impress of the actual form and features—make a tall man short—change, so as to be recognisable, a countenance on which nature had set a brand of villany, cruelty, or ugliness—or degrade that which was stamped, as with Antinous, with almost divine beauty.

The extraordinary expression of *power* in the portrait-busts of Julius Cæsar must be seen to be understood. He looks born to rule the world, and to fascinate his very enemies. There is the air of supreme command, refined intellect, and heroic composure in that well-filled forehead, broad eye-lines, prominent eyebrows, manly nose, and closely shut mouth. “A God-like Mars, to threaten and command.” That finely cut face has no trace either cruel or vindictive ; there is nothing mean, hollow, or false ; no set smile on the mouth in which the general features do not partake ; no breadth of chin, always indicative of sensuality and selfishness, but calm severe lines over the whole countenance—an unmoved look full of tolerance, patience, and wisdom. A man this, even in youth, with passions under command, and utterly devoid of temper ; one who could cast aside at a fitting moment the flowery chains woven round him by that Circe, Cleopatra,—who could reason with or exterminate his barbarian foes, or calmly reply, in an elegant oration, to the diatribes of enraged

opponents in the camp or in the Senate, with lofty insensibility to personal feeling or political insult.

Cæsar is without vanity; he feels his superiority too much. He is too conscious of all victory, mental and physical, not to bear humanely with his adversaries. What he proposes to do, he does; for he is a fatalist also, and believes in his star. Nemesis is his friend. Into the hands of destiny he commits himself. Nothing but the thrust of a base assassin could terminate such a career in its very zenith. All this and much more is read on his face; the life of Julius Cæsar is stamped in his portraits. One can understand how he was beloved by the army and the people; how the passionate Antony roared as it were for grief, when Cæsar lay dead before him; how Brutus was execrated; and how imperialism, in the person of his heir Octavius, came to be engrafted on republican Rome. It was all for love of great Cæsar, and to avenge his death upon the vile republicans his murderers. One little touch of personal vanity appears in his busts and statues. Even as a young man his hair was scanty, and his brow was high. The hair is carefully brushed forward to make the most of it. I have elsewhere said that no honour decreed him by the Senate gratified him so much as the right always to wear a laurel crown; because later in life it concealed his baldness.

As an older man his character can be well studied in two very characteristic busts in the Uffizi at Florence. He has grown very thin, and is greatly wrinkled ; much of the youthful calm is gone, and the organs of perception about the eyebrow have become exaggerated, as though life had grown more difficult to him. The look of intellect—more indeed than intellect, omniscience almost—has increased. His eyes seem to fathom all things ; but strife and trouble, and a keen look of ever-present watchfulness, bring down the aged hero nearer to humanity. He is anxious, for he has something to gain which is refused him by his enemies ; Cæsar would be king and cannot. Had he lived, who knows ? The prejudices of the Quirites, the laws of the Senate, might have yielded to his craving ; for his mouth is tight-set as of yore, and the expression of power and courage does not fail under the network of wrinkles.

Octavius generally appears crowned with a civic crown of oak-leaves and acorns. There are two very striking full-length statues of him thus decorated, in the Museo Borbonico at Naples. (The exquisite bust in the Vatican, known as the "Young Augustus," is almost too ideal to represent more than the harmony of classic beauty ; it is like a melody perfect in its modulations. Even here he is very like his great uncle ; but it is a fairer face cast in a weaker mould).

An able man this, intellectual and self-possessed, with lofty forehead, straight nose, and finely cut eyes. But there is a vexed, human look about the lines of the eyes, a slight wrinkle between the eyebrows almost peevish in character, utterly unlike the Olympian calm of Julius Cæsar. That majestic deportment and impassive look, which sat naturally upon him, becomes conventional in his nephew. Yet it is curious to trace the strong family likeness struggling through the different natures of the two men, alike, yet unlike.

Augustus is a man of mixed motives. He is false even to slyness, for the expression of the whole face is fitful, and the mouth is uncertain ; there is the shadow of a fawning smile on his shapely lip marking the hypocrite and the intriguer. He would not ask, like his great-uncle, for what he desired, but he would take it, *steal* it, looking bland the while. He has sensual passions too this cold Julian, seen in the fulness of the mouth, chin, and neck, though well under control. He is open to flattery, and loves reverence, as offered by the crafty Livia, the false Tiberius, and the subservient Senate ; for thus we read a certain conscious look of complacent vanity ; partly distrustful of himself too, as conveyed by a slight contraction about the eyes, as though curiously inquisitive of others' thoughts about him. Augustus, though

repulsing so coldly the advances of that Phryne of his day Cleopatra, was, in the plenitude of his power, somewhat of an intriguer. He fell passionately in love with Livia, a woman of extraordinary beauty only twenty years old, and then and there repudiating Scribonia, tore Livia from her husband Claudius Nero, and married her. Now, it is nowhere recorded that Livia objected to this abduction which made her empress of the world. A Roman dame of twenty attached to the imperial court knew life, and it is possible that the passion of Augustus for her may not have commenced with the actual union; otherwise how is it possible to account for the extraordinary likeness of her son, the Claudius Tiberius, to his adopted father? In his tell-tale features a scandal two thousand years old creeps out: the Augustine type is written on his face. No flattering sculptor could have moulded features into such a resemblance if it had not in reality existed. Many busts and statues remain of Tiberius, notably a grand portrait-statue in the Museo Borbonico, but there is precisely the same type in all. There is the massive brow, the broad-cut eyes, aquiline nose, characteristic mouth, and stately expression. But the eyes and forehead are prematurely wrinkled. It is a brooding face, indicating a mind powerful, but ill at ease; one in which every event undergoes a process of what

may be called *mental digestion* ; a nature that feeds upon itself in solitude, bitterness, and suspicion. Had he not been master of the world, he would have been querulous and exacting ; as it is, he is profoundly discontented, and incapable of sympathy with pleasant things ; yet in the fine statue to which I have referred, Tiberius looks neither cruel nor sensual. One may imagine him cruel, but not wantonly so, or by nature. Cruel, because he is firm to obstinacy, from a conviction of justice and from confirmed suspicion. That there is great intellect in him it is plain to see—there is every trace of it ; and one may readily believe he was a determined general, a patron of learning, an eloquent orator, and a classical purist both in speech and pen. He is represented in the prime of life, for his head is covered with hair, and I am bound to say that, beyond the dogged sternness of a somewhat saturnine countenance, no characteristic attributed to him by Tacitus is to be found. Who knows if Tacitus were not a partisan ? Who can tell whether Tiberius exceeded in wickedness those who went before him, as he *certainly did not* those who came after him ? These are the questions I ask myself, looking into his eyes and scanning his features. Vices absent in youth may have developed themselves in age, fed by unwholesome solitude and personal fears, in that immutable nature that *could*

feel nothing lightly, either for good or for bad, with that hard earnest face. But that same solitude may have exposed Tiberius to scandalous imputations which a more public life would have rebutted ; and personal fears may have arisen from the knowledge of constant plots against his life. We know not why he decimated the Senate while ridiculing the servility of the senators, or why he retired from Rome to live at Capri, the cautious Tiberius ; but this we *do* know, that he lived to a good old age—a rare instance among the Cæsars,—and that it is probable that he died in his bed, although Caligula is said to have *assisted* him in his dying moments.

Caligula, the successor of Tiberius, is well represented by a full-length statue in the Museo Borbonico, as well as in busts at the Florence Uffizi and in the Capitol at Rome. The historic analogy between the countenance and the life is wonderfully evidenced in Caligula, the first Roman emperor who broke out into that imperial *mania* which infected many of the Cæsars, making them more like wild beasts than men. Caligula was the successor of Tiberius, and grandson of Augustus by Julia his only daughter the wife of Agrippa, and son of Agrippina and Germanicus. Here the family type is to be traced through positive ugliness ; his wicked wild nature looking out of small savage eyes ; the hardened tyrant evidenced

by the dropping corners of the mouth, who jeers at his victim and laughs at his death-throes; a more vile countenance cannot be found in the whole gallery of historic art.

The innumerable busts of Nero, whose face is as a living tablet whereon to read his life, are instances of his vanity. He was the son of the daughter of Germanicus. The family likeness is again seen, but diluted as it were from the energetic expression of Caligula. Nero was as much fool as madman, and has a weaker countenance. He has the broad brow and shapely eyes of his ancestors, but so enveloped in fat—evidently the fat of over-fed youth—that the Julian type is almost lost. There is a self-satisfied leer about the mouth,—lines of sarcastic cruelty and brutal meanness—resembling Caligula; over all a fatuous complacent smirk, that recalls the self-deified artist piping in a cracked voice to the listening Senate—the coward who knew not how to die! We have Nero at all ages and in many attitudes, showing often little in common with the well-fed youth of earlier years. Older he is sterner, thinner, and more like Augustus, though always weak and womanish about the mouth. But his foul nature culminates in the well-known portrait-bust with the head turned aside, where the drawn features and murderous eyes bring out all the treachery of this Imperial Matricide.

The sitting statue of Agrippina is admirable as a portrait statue. The *pose*, as she leans back in a marble chair, is full of matronly grace and dignity ; but she is life-weary, and her thoughts are sad. Canova has imitated this statue in his sitting portrait of *Madame Mère*, mother of Napoleon, and in the Princess Paulina Borghese, her daughter, as *Venus Victrix*, at the Villa Borghese at Rome. Agrippina was the daughter of Germanicus and the first Agrippina, a model of every virtue. Not so her daughter, who was both licentious and cruel. She was twice married, the second time to the gluttonous Claudius, whom she poisoned by a *ragout* of mushrooms, to place her son Nero on the throne—Nero, who in his turn murdered her. Agrippina is no longer young ; it is a sad stern face of regular features furrowed by the passage of fierce passions ; the passions gone, the sadness remaining. There is a troubled look about the mouth and eyes where many a wrinkle gathers, as though she felt power had gone from her, and that she had become but a victim to that son whom she adored. The shadows of coming death seem to gather around her as she sits there curiously musing, the great empress, asking herself it may be how long Nero will permit her to live—Nero, whom she had crowned by a crime. The vileness of Nero can only be thoroughly understood

after studying this most suggestive statue of a mother, at once his victim and his benefactress.

In the Museo Borbonico there is a most remarkable bust of Julia, only daughter of Augustus by Scribonia, three times married—the last time to Tiberius. A head and face more thoroughly original it is impossible to see; the woman in all her foul history rises before one. This is a lady of whom judging from her bust alone, much scandal with Ovid or others might be believed if one knew nothing of her history; and that her father Augustus, disgusted by her vices, banished her, and that Tiberius had her starved to death. It is the most sensual, false, furtive face imaginable. A *Lamia* or *serpent-woman*, by no means wanting in charm of a certain sort and with much of the Julian dignity, withal clever, *piquante*, and fascinating. The upper part of the face has both delicacy and intellect; but the mouth is large and coarse as that of an animal. Her hair which grows low on her forehead, is divided in front and combed straight back above her pencilled eyebrows; she wears a kind of *chignon* behind, much in the modern fashion. I know of no antique bust extant that so proves the correctness of history in physiognomy.

Now we leave the Julian type, which, even degraded in Caligula and Nero, retained somewhat of the majesty

of the great Julius in the brow and about the eyes, to study a baser mould in the "barbarian" or foreign-descended emperors.

Vespasian, born of obscure parents, is essentially *bourgeois*; a coarse-featured, practical-looking man, who would certainly "relish the smell of garlic, and fall asleep while Nero sang," as seen in his busts either at Rome, Florence, or Naples. The likeness is evidently life-like, for there is no subtle peculiarity, no shifting expression, to perplex the artist. He is enormously fat about the cheeks and chin, with the bland look common to fat faces; but it is here intermingled with evident falseness in the contracted eyes and set action of the mouth; a broad, coarse mouth, ready to adapt itself to any expression—to enlarge or contract with deceitful smiles or hard indifference. By reason of this united firmness and adaptability, he may have come to die a natural death. A man, Vespasian, who one sees would give no *ill* words, but whose *good* word might not only carry no conviction, but might even arouse suspicion. A soldierly-looking man accustomed to command, yet who if it suited his purpose, could also obey, with the ready facility of a politic but heartless nature. Titus and Domitian repeat their father's features, with this difference, that the expression of Titus is angelic, that of his brother diabolical.

The African Caracalla, of whom there are many busts extant, has a swollen countenance and thick lips suggestive of negro blood. He has round set eyes and dilated nostrils, that seem to scent the smell of blood like a hungry wolf. Looking at him one ceases to wonder that murder was his pastime, and that he was more idiotic in its indulgence than either Caligula, Nero, or Domitian, who were at least men of education and knew how to be polished in their manners. How such a monster could be born and bred is strange to understand; for monster he must have been with that terrific countenance from his birth; no education could have tamed such a savage.

Like Nero, Lucius Verus must have been vain of his person, for his busts are frequently met with. I describe him from one in the Museo Borbonico. A great shock of curling hair waves about his head, and full whiskers overlap his effeminate but handsome face. Every feature expresses self-satisfaction and conscious beauty; an imperial fop, the friend and companion of Hadrian and Antinous. These busts of Verus must have been taken in youth: debauchery has not yet marred the refined mould of his features; but there is sufficient weakness visible to account for every puerility he committed as emperor.

Stern, evil-looking, cruel is Hadrian, every feature expressing power and suppressed passion ; a beast of prey, and of bestial propensities, but with ample intellectual development to control the baser nature. He has fixed, earnest eyes, without a sparkle of humanity to soften their immobility ; thin sarcastic lips, prominent nose, a round voluptuous chin, with a stubby beard, which he wore to cover certain ungainly warts ; altogether an appearance, as if the great soldier (who always went bare-headed) was careless of adornment, and loved to look *rough and ready* to suit his wandering life.

Lower than even the lowest of the imperial types is Heliogabalus, that Phœnician madman who was invested with the purple at fourteen. His likeness is seldom found among the emperors, but I have studied him in a portrait-bust, full of individuality, in the Museo Borbonico. He is quite a youth, the likeness being probably taken shortly before his death,—for he was murdered at eighteen : his cheeks are smooth, and his hair coquettishly curled. It is a strange countenance very modern in character, extraordinarily effeminate, with large ox-eyes, a *fleur de tête*, and a mouth with ill-fitting lips, utterly idiotic. Such a creature was born to be the tool of others ; and Heliogabalus was the tool of the three Julias, his mother, aunt, and grandmother, clever, bigoted women,

who reigned through him as colleagues, and drifted him into those excesses of early debauchery that made his name a by-word, in order that they themselves might not be interfered with. But these Phœnician princesses, otherwise most able, wanted the wisdom of moderation. Heliogabalus, who disgusted even the dissolute Romans by the novelties of an Asiatic worship, only reigned three years ; and his female relatives were put to death with him.

And now, looking backward through the gallery of the emperors, from Heliogabalus, the personification of the basest humanity, a body without a soul, to the majestic form of Julius Cæsar, where power, intellect, and graciousness ennoble him into a semblance of that divinity with which he was invested—is not the degradation of the imperial line, the rottenness of the empire, and the wickedness of the Emperors descending step by step lower in type and feature, portrayed more plainly and understood more thoroughly than in the pages of any history ?

This short chapter only details an individual study, which might be enlarged into a science—a science by which, looking in the faces of the great dead who ruled the world, we might reason out for ourselves cause and effect, solve the problem of how far history is correct and historians impartial, and challenge the past with the same freedom as we challenge the present.



THE CAMPUS MARTIUS.



WITHIN the area of the ancient Campus Martius is included the principal portion of modern Rome, "her domes and turrets crowned with many a cross." It was formerly enclosed and belted by the low hills of the Capitol, the Viminal, the Quirinal, and the *Collis hortulorum*, and bounded on the opposite extremity by the banks of the Tiber. Where the stately Corso, the mediæval Piazza di Venezia, and the Piazza del Popolo, vibrate with active life, anciently extended a rich and fertile plain, covered with waving fields of golden corn, a royal estate or apanage, reserved by Romulus as his private patrimony, and devoted to the especial benefit of the kings his successors. After the expulsion of Tarquinius and the fall of the kingly dynasty, this fertile plain was converted into an open meadow dedicated to military exercises and public amusement; purposes for which its level grassy surface, and vicinity to the river, were admirably adapted.

"It happened," says Livy, who ever loves to give the why and the wherefore of every occurrence, "that there was on the ground a crop of corn, ripe for the sickle, and because it would have been an impiety to make use of the produce of the field, a great number of men were sent in who, carrying it in baskets, threw the crop grain and straw together, into the Tiber, whose waters were low at that time. The heaps of corn being dammed up in the shallows, and having contracted a covering of mud, sunk and remained fixed, by which means added to the accumulation of other materials, *an island* was gradually formed." Thus the crops growing on the consecrated ground dedicated to Mars, on the Tarquinian field, formed the embryo of that large and thickly over-built *Isola del Tevere*, every stranger has so often traversed.

At first the Campus Martius was ill-drained and marshy, but in the course of time it came to be improved and beautified. During the Republic but few public buildings were erected upon it; but under the Empire the verdant plain, profusely adorned with splendid monuments, became a second and more decorated city. What a world of recollections arise as we picture this ample space resplendent with circuses, temples, porticoes, fountains, columns, and Naumachiæ; divided by sacred groves and spacious gardens, each consul, dictator, and

emperor, striving to outdo his predecessors in the magnificence of his embellishments and erections !

This suburb, built with every regard to architectural beauty, must (especially seen from the heights of the Janiculum) have realized Rome's proud appellation of "the abode of all the gods."

Towards the furthest extremity, close by the Flaminian gate, uprose the massive pyramid consecrated to the imperial dead—the Mausoleum of Augustus, surmounted by his statue, of which I shall speak elsewhere, enclosed in dark funereal groves stretching upwards in sombre masses towards the summit of the *Collis hortulorum*, where outspread the rich expanse of the *Horti Domitii*, crowned with the sepulchral monument of that family.

But mightiest among the magnificent structures of the Campus Martius towered the Pantheon, built, as all the world knows, by Agrippa, minister and son-in-law of Augustus, in that particular portion of the enclosure near the centre, known as "the field of Agrippa," an enclosure embellished with a splendour suited to the vast fortune of the possessor. Around his baths—afterwards altered to form a temple, the Pantheon—lay his gardens and his lakes watered by the *Aqua Virgo*, a pure source derived from a spring near the Anio, first brought into Rome by Agrippa, and to this day esteemed above all others,

under the name of the *Acqua Vergine*, supplying thirteen fountains, including the beautiful *Fontana di Trevi*, in the modern city. All that oriental luxury and Roman riches could invent most rare and lovely, was lavished in the decoration of these gardens.

The lake, in particular, has been immortalised by the pen of Tacitus, as the scene of a banquet given by Nero to his favourite Tigellinus, exceeding in profusion any entertainment Rome had ever witnessed. The guests were placed on a raft, or platform of prodigious size, set in motion by a number of richly ornamented boats. The surrounding country was ransacked for a supply of the finest fish and game, as well as every delicacy imaginable, (to rouse the languid appetites of the satiated guests,) all set out on tables glittering with golden plate. Thousands of torches blazed in the surrounding groves, while symphonies of enchanting music executed among the recesses of flowery bowers, and voluptuous dances, added to the delights of this scene of midnight revelry.

Before speaking of the majestic Pantheon, the St. Peter's of ancient Rome, a few remarks on the progress and origin of the sumptuous structures dedicated to the gods by the ancient Romans, may not be inappropriate.

In early days, when the world was young, a stone set up within a grove, or in the recesses of a primeval forest,

satisfied the piety of an uneducated people, and became consecrated in public opinion as an altar to the presiding deities. The sylvan aspect of an uncultivated country, skirted with woods, or darkened by impenetrable forests, gave to these rude shrines the names of *Fanum*, *Lucus*, or *Tesca*. When the image of any particular god came to be erected, the *Cella* or *Ædícula*, in the form of a niched wall, was added to guard the idol against the intemperature of the weather, and the profanation of passers by. In course of time, when the ideas of a more dignified worship gradually prevailed, a portico surrounded the primitive altar, lending a more imposing aspect to the consecrated spot. Later, as luxury and civilisation increased, and the aboriginal stock gave place to a race of men of enlarged minds and cultivated manners, with ideas modified by travel, and a knowledge of the artistic refinements of the Greeks, the *Cella* was deemed too mean an habitation for the god, and the *Templum* gradually arose, the altar however still keeping its place on the exterior of the edifice. The portals of the Temple at first opened towards the south, but the west came at last to be the favourite aspect, of which arrangement the Pantheon offers an example.

What a marvellous metamorphosis from the rough stone block, set up on end in the silent depths of a

primeval forest, to the glittering edifice which adorned the field of Agrippa in the Campus Martius, its golden dome blazing under the blue canopy of an Italian sky, at once a model of architectural beauty and artistic proportion !

The building was divided into two portions, the Rotunda and the Portico ; the first originally destined by Agrippa as the "*Caldarium*" to his baths. Afterwards, wishing to convert the edifice into a temple dedicated to Augustus, as the tutelary deity of Rome, he added the portico ; Augustus, however, refused the proffered honour, and only consented that his statue should be erected in the Peristyle, where it occupied the niche to the right on entering, while that of Agrippa was placed on the left. The Temple was first dedicated to Jupiter Ultor, but afterwards, when all the circle of Olympus came to be honoured there, its name was altered to Pantheon, either because all the gods were included in the worship, or, as Dion Cassius says, "because its dome was shaped like heaven."

No temple in the world exceeded it in size and magnificence. The portico, supported by sixteen columns of oriental granite, was reached by an ascent of five marble steps ; the walls of the peristyle were lined with the most precious marbles, ornamented with bassi rilievi ; the floor

was laid with a pavement of marble and porphyry ; the roof, supported by beams of bronze, glittered with ornaments of silver, on a back-ground of gold, while statues of bronze decorated the frontispiece, and golden tiles shone on the exterior of the roof.

Six great niches broke the line of the inner walls, each niche forming an *Ædícula* or temple, containing a statue in bronze, silver, gold, or ivory, of a separate god or goddess, the image of Jupiter occupying the central altar. Innumerable statues also ornamented the walls, the most celebrated being that of Venus, to which was suspended the half of the great pearl which figured at the famous supper of that "rare Egyptian," Cleopatra. Each *Ædícula* was separated by columns of yellow marble with capitals of bronze, these columns also supporting an entablature of white marble, which surrounded the interior. An attic pierced by fourteen windows, divided by Caryatides of bronze, surmounted the entablature, the whole being coped by a dome only two feet less in diameter than the Cupola of Saint Peter's, resplendent with gilt bronze, the circular orifice opening to the heavens, the rays of the sun being softened by an ample purple veil, descending from the roof.

It is quite marvellous that such a glorious edifice should have been erected at the cost of a single indi-

vidual. The magnates of old Rome must have possessed fabulous riches. It is related that this same Agrippa was in the habit of throwing among the people lottery tickets, entitling the finder to gifts of money, precious stuffs, and rich furniture ; that, during the continuance of his games he paid barbers to shave every Roman *gratis*, and also gave over to the populace, magazines, filled with every kind of costly merchandise to pillage at their pleasure.

Eighteen centuries have passed since the wealthy senator raised that glorious temple, yet the Pantheon still preserves its majestic portico, its matchless dome, its fluted columns, and its pavement, once trodden by the feet of Augustus. The hand of time, as if impressed with the grandeur of this classic monument, has dealt kindly with its walls, and their deep tints and heavy shadows but add dignity to its aspect. Yet the interior of the Cupola is shorn of its beams ; the gilded bronze and the silver that glistened on its sides and vaulted the Portico, have disappeared ; the dews of morning and the wintry mists penetrate its unveiled dome and fall heavily on the marble pavement beneath, the precious lining of the interior walls has vanished, the statues that decorated the cornice are gone. Genseric began the odious work of spoliation, and had the venerable

walls not been dedicated as a church, it is impossible to say what ruin the rapacity of succeeding generations might not have wrought.

But I pass on to mention another temple, conspicuous among the famous shrines decorating the ample plain. The Temple of Antoninus Pius standing in the *Piazza di Pietra*, is now used as a custom-house ; eleven majestic columns of fluted white marble, of the Corinthian order, still remain, supporting a massive entablature. They appear to have suffered from the action of fire, and belonged to one of the side porticoes which, according to the plan of Palladio, consisted originally of fifteen pillars. Many authorities have looked on this temple as the remains of the Portico of Neptune, erected by Agrippa in memory of the naval battles gained by Augustus : while German authorities suppose it to have been a shrine, dedicated to Marciana, the sister of Trajan ; but the most valued authorities unite in considering it as the Temple of Antoninus Pius, once standing in the Forum that bore his name. The column of Antoninus Pius and Faustina, discovered in 1709 on Monte Citorio, and often confounded with the other monument now standing in the Piazza Colonna, stood near. It was of granite, and was disinterred by Fontana, in the gardens of the Fathers of the Mission, by order of Clement XI. After many pro-

jects of raising it in different positions, the pedestal was removed to that portion of the Vatican gardens called *la Pigna*, around which extend the galleries and the library. It is admirably restored ; one side bears an inscription, on the other the imperial apotheosis is represented. A winged genius, finely proportioned, betraying however in its heavy action much of the decline of art, bears the Emperor and Faustina upwards. They appear as half-size figures very awkwardly placed, and are flanked by two eagles with extended pinions. To the left another genius is seated on the ground, upon a rock, on which a small representation of the column stands. To the right, a female wearing a helmet, and seated on a throne, images very clumsily imperial Rome, who appears to contemplate with pleasure and surprise the upward flight of the good Emperor. Confused representations of battles too much effaced to be restored, occupy the two other divisions of this monument, much more interesting for its antiquity than from its artistic merit.

Speaking of columns, I must devote a few words to the so-called Antonine Column, now standing in the *Piazza Colonna*. How few of the strangers, or even the Romans themselves who traverse that *Piazza*, occupying the centre of the *Corso*, the very heart of Rome where her varied life audibly palpitates, are aware of the historic recollec-

tions connected with that monument standing so gracefully beside the gushing fountain. It was erected by the Senate in honour of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, to celebrate his victories over the Marcomanni, the Quadi, and other German nations. That the marble bassi rilievi on the column represent his military exploits any guidebook will inform the stranger; but all may not be aware that those sculptures are commemorative of a most interesting legend. In the year 176 of the Christian era, this Emperor commanded his army in person against the Gauls. Deceived by the Quadi the Romans found themselves enclosed in a deep valley, encircled on all sides by precipitous mountains. The barbarians were encamped on the summit of the heights. The Romans, anticipating the humiliation of a defeat similar to that of the Caudine Forks, can neither advance nor retreat; they are tormented with thirst, they are in want of food, a mutiny seems inevitable. In this extremity the commander of the Prætorian Guards informs the Emperor, that the Melitine legion, forming part of the body of the army, are Christians, and that they declare every thing may be obtained by prayer. "*Let them pray then,*" replies Antoninus. Full of faith, the legion prostrate themselves on the ground, and conjure the Christian God to succour the Roman troops.

They had scarcely risen from their knees, when thick clouds darken the air, thunder peals through the deep fastnesses of the mountains, a tremendous shower of hail accompanied by lightning drives the barbarians from their entrenchments, while a soft and gracious rain falls over the Roman camp, and refreshes the worn-out soldiers. "So that," says the Pagan historian, "at the same time, and in the same place, fire and water descended from the clouds, one burning the enemy as with scalding oil, the other invigorating the Romans. In their despair, the Quadi rushed down from their camp, and casting themselves frantically into the midst of the Romans where the gentle rain descended, sought relief from their tortures ; even the Emperor pitied them." In memory of this miracle, continues Dion Cassius, the army proclaimed Marcus Aurelius Emperor for the seventh time ; and he decreed that ever after, these Christian troops should be called "the Thundering Legion." When writing afterwards to the Senate, to inform them of this miraculous success, Marcus Aurelius commanded that all persecutions against the Christians should henceforth cease.

In the street, close to the Piazza Colonna, now called Monte Citorio, where stands the new parliament-house of United Italy, was situated the *Septa Julia*, a magni-

ficent marble portico, supported by countless pillars, once conspicuous in the Campus Martius as the place where the people assembled to deliberate on the choice of Magistrates. Not far distant stood the *Villa Publica*, a sumptuous building of two stories, surrounded by porticoes, destined for the reception of ambassadors from foreign nations during their residence in Rome. A portion of the portico is said to exist incorporated in an obscure *vicolo* close to the Church of Sant' Ignazio. Near the *Septa* stood the Temples of Isis and Serapis, on the space now occupied by the garden and library of the Church of the Minerva, and the Convent of *St. Stefano del Cacco*. A statue of Isis was discovered here, together with the two Egyptian lionesses that now flank the ascent to the modern Campidoglio; also two obelisks, one placed on the Piazza della Minerva, the other opposite the Pantheon.

The Church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva was, as its name designates, originally a temple dedicated to that goddess, founded by Pompey, after his victories in Asia. A fine statue of Minerva was found among the ruins. The modern church is noted among the crowd of sacred edifices that claim the attention of the stranger as being the only Gothic church in Rome, and as possessing Michael Angelo's statue of Christ. It is attached to a

convent of Dominicans, who possess a splendid library, and it contains the tomb of the great devotional painter Fra Angelico.

The Church of Sta. Maria in Aquiro, situated in the Piazza degli Orfanelli, near the Tiber, recalls, by its Pagan *sobriquet*, the column of the Equiria, celebrated in ancient annals as the spot where certain games and horse-races instituted by Romulus, were celebrated. Ovid gives a lively description of these festivities in the *Fasti*. They took place in the month of March, on the banks of the river. The *gens rustica* coming into the city in crowds from the Ager, and mixing with the more polished Quirites, cast themselves together on the grassy carpet overspreading the Campus Martius, or formed themselves into different groups, all drinking and singing in the open air. "Some constructed huts of boughs, supported on a network of reeds, upon which they spread their clothes, within which shelter when heated by the sun and the wine they had drunk they seated themselves, and passed the time in hilarious mirth, wishing each other long life and happiness. Then they recounted what they had seen at the theatres, gesticulating with their hands as they spoke; others danced merrily, while many women, with unbraided hair falling over their shoulders staggered about half tipsy, a sad spectacle

to lookers on, who called them mockingly, "*The Happy.*"

The Portico of Octavia and the Theatre of Marcellus, portions of which still remain, were conspicuous among the edifices of the Campus Martius, and were probably only separated from each other by umbrageous groves.

The ancient Porticoes are described as spacious corridors or galleries, often extending to an immense length supported by marble columns, the walls profusely decorated with paintings and statues, and the floors covered with mosaics, while the inner enclosure was laid out in elegant gardens, adorned with fountains. Sometimes these gorgeous halls formed the vestibule to different temples, often they were placed in the vicinity of the Forums, as a refuge for the people either from the winter cold or the summer heat. The Portico of Octavia, erected by Augustus in honour of his sister the neglected wife of the sensual Antony, lay in the immediate neighbourhood of the *Forum Olitorium*, or herb-market. It was decorated with the spoils brought by Augustus from Dalmatia, and contained two temples, as well as a *schola*, or hall, devoted to conversation, and a curia for the assembly of the Senate, known as the Curia Octaviæ. This superb pile of buildings was destroyed by fire in the reign of Titus. The blackened and mouldering fragments

still stand, "mocking their former state," in the midst of the Ghetto; and under those pillars, once decorated with the most exquisite Grecian statues, dirty old women, as ugly as Gorgons, now sit huddled in rags, selling fish.

The Theatre of Marcellus, known as the Palazzo Orsini, was also built by Augustus in emulation of Pompey, who had lately adorned the Campus Martius with his theatre. It was dedicated to Marcellus his nephew, and intended successor, whose remains were the first to occupy the *Loculi* within the Augustan Mausoleum. It was large enough to contain 30,000 spectators. This spacious theatre once glittering with polished marbles, under which the perfumed youth of imperial Rome lounged in luxurious idleness, is now fallen into a grim and hideous decay. The whole of the lower portion of the circular building is divided into obscure cellars occupied by blacksmiths, and the upper walls are so obscured by the accumulated smoke of ages, that the few remaining pillars encased within the walls are barely distinguishable. The theatre suffered severely in the conflagration under Nero, which partly accounts for its dingy appearance. It was repaired by Vespasian, but again fell into ruin in the reign of Alexander Severus, although representations took place there as late as the fifth century of the Christian era. It experienced the

same fate as the other massive ruins of the ancient city during the Middle Ages, being converted into a fortress, and standing various sieges and assaults, while alternately in the possession of the Savelli and the Orsini families.

Although the Romans were in the habit of interring the dead without the city walls, generally along the most frequented roads (such as the *Via Appia*), where whole avenues of tombs embosomed in cypress trees and funereal groves lined the approaches to the city with a depressing grandeur, a few illustrious individuals were permitted to occupy Mausoleums within the enclosure of the *Campus Martius*. Some remains of these monuments have come down to us. Pre-eminent was the Mausoleum of Augustus. Sylla also enjoyed this distinction, as we read in Plutarch, his sepulchre standing near the modern *Piazza del Popolo*, near the site of the Church of *Santa Maria dei Miracoli*. The tomb of Bibulus, of simple and solid construction, still rests under the Capitoline hill. Hadrian's monument, although situated on the other side of the Tiber, was, nevertheless, included within the boundary of the *Campus Martius*, Julius Cæsar having added a portion of the land on the opposite bank of the river extending to the foot of the Vatican hills, the communication between either bank being facilitated by seven bridges.

Nothing could exceed the solid magnificence of Hadrian's monument, erected with the intention of emulating, if not exceeding, the Augustan Mausoleum. Though stripped of external decorations, the hand of time has left those stupendous walls untouched. Originally the exterior was encased with slabs of Parian marble, and the circular summit adorned with statues of men, horses, and chariots. Such was the thickness of the walls, that the interior only contained a small staircase, and a narrow sepulchral chamber, where the urn containing the imperial ashes was placed. Honorius converted the building into a fortress, which it still remains, having also been used at various times as a state prison. It is worthy of record, that the Emperor of the French, Louis Napoleon, was confined here for political offences, and that his name and the date, 1836, written by his own hand, are still visible on the walls.

Among the many Circuses that adorned the Campus Martius, that of Flaminius is interesting as having been erected by the very Caius Flaminius who perished at the battle of Thrasymene, that terrible defeat after which the neighbouring streams literally ran red with Roman blood. In republican times, the ground known as the "*fields of Flaminius*" was used for horse and chariot races, which exhibitions were continued within the

enclosure of the newly erected circus, which became famous afterwards for the games given there in honour of the infernal deities. It served also as a market and as a place for popular assemblies.

Marcus Fulvius, returning to Rome after a successful campaign in Ætolia, requested the Senate to honour him with a triumph. After some factious opposition his demand was granted, and the triumph celebrated with great pomp, many of the spoils taken from King Antiochus being displayed. "Before he rode into the city," says Livy, "he honoured great numbers of tribunes, prefects, and centurions, with military presents, in the *Flaminian Circus*. This circus is also mentioned by Livy, as the place where Marcellus the conqueror of Syracuse, and the opponent of Hannibal, was arraigned by the people for his supposed treacherous and dilatory conduct of the war against the Carthaginians. The plebeians accused him and the nobles, as the cause that Hannibal still held possessions in southern Italy for the tenth year. It must have been a stormy scene, all the passions and the interests of the nation being involved in the discussion. The debate ended by Marcellus' triumphantly refuting the charge, and reciting the services he had performed. The next day he was elected Consul.

Augustus used this circus as a *Naumachia*, at a grand spectacle, with which he regaled the people, when thirty-six crocodiles were killed. A portion of the Circus existed in the Middle Ages, and was known as the *Castellum Aureum*. In the sixteenth century some remains were still visible, but they were demolished, to make way for the foundations of the Palazzo Mattei. The Church of Santa Caterina dei Funari is supposed to occupy the centre of the Arena.

The Circus of Alexander Severus, also called *Agonalis*, and *Stadium of Domitian*, may be distinctly traced in the elliptical form of the Piazza Navona, so beautifully decorated with three magnificent fountains. The central one, irreverently described by Forsyth as "a fable of *Æsop*, done into stone," is considered the *chef d'œuvre* of Bernini. The piazza is now used as a vegetable market, the open space being lined with an infinite variety of Italian "green grocery," of shapes and colours utterly strange to English eyes and palates. The handsome Church of Sant' Agnese, built and maintained by the Doria family, stands conspicuous in the centre. Erected over the *lupanar* of the Circus, this edifice enshrines the memory of the most ancient, as well as the most touching story among the annals of Roman martyrdom. The details recorded by St. Jerome, who, writing in the fourth

century, says "that the fame of St. Agnes was spread over all nations," are too interesting to be omitted.

In the reign of Diocletian there lived in the city of Rome a certain maiden called Agnes, daughter of a rich and noble family. Now, whether this tender flower, who was not more than thirteen years old, was called Agnes in reference to her lamb-like disposition, or because Agnes in Greek signifies chaste, is not recorded ; but it is certain that she was filled with the gifts of holiness and goodness to an extraordinary degree, and loved and followed the Saviour from her earliest years. It chanced that a certain noble youth, son of the Prefect of Rome, called Semprenius, riding through the streets, saw and straightway became violently enamoured of her, desiring to make her his wife ; but the maiden rejected all his offers, although he brought her rich presents, bracelets of gold, and rare jewels. Agnes refused, however, to listen to him, saying, "Away tempter, for I am already betrothed to a lover who is greater and fairer than thou." These words inflamed the young man with deadly jealousy and rage. He went home, and casting himself on his bed became sick almost unto death ; and when the physicians were called in, they could do nothing to ease his pain. "For," they said, "he is sick of unrequited love." Then his father questioned him, and he confessed his passion, say-

ing, "Unless you procure me Agnes to be my wife I shall die." Sempronius, who tenderly loved his son, repaired forthwith to Agnes, beseeching her to have pity on him and to espouse him ; but she spoke always the same words as at first, which angered the young man's father, who straightway inquired of the neighbours, "Who was her betrothed?" and one replied, "Do you not know that Agnes has been a Christian from her infancy, and that the husband of whom she speaks is no other than Jesus Christ?" When the prefect heard this he greatly rejoiced, for, as an edict had gone forth against the Christians, he knew that Agnes was in his power.

Forthwith he sent for the damsel to his house, and after again urging on her his son's passion, which again she disdained, he threatened her with horrible sufferings and death ; and loading her tender limbs with chains, dragged her before the altars of the false gods to sacrifice. But Agnes stood firm. Finding that the fear of death had no power over her, the cruel noble ordered her to be carried to a place of public infamy, the *lupanar* of the *Circus Agonalis*, and there to be exposed. The soldiers who dragged her thither stripped her of her garments, at which barbarous treatment Agnes meekly bent down her head and prayed, when immediately her hair, already long and abundant, became to her like a veil covering her from

head to foot, so that the soldiers were astounded, and dared not look on her for fear. But they shut her up in a little cell, where she earnestly prayed "that the same Lord to whom she had consecrated her youth, would shield her from dishonour." Immediately she saw before her a white and shining garment, in which she clothed herself, and the whole cell was filled with a celestial light.

Meanwhile the wicked young noble, deeming the maiden absolutely in his power, descended into the cell, but when he approached her he became blind, and fell down in convulsions as one dying. His father and mother came weeping and wailing to assist him, when Agnes, who was of a truly Christian temper, seeing their distress was melted to compassion, and prayed that he might be restored to health. Her prayer was at once miraculously granted. Then the youth and his father, filled with gratitude, would fain have saved the maiden, but the people called out that she was a witch and a sorceress, and deserved death; so the tumult increasing, Agnes, who openly declared herself a Christian, was condemned to be burnt on a pile of faggots, which were straightway collected. But when the fire was kindled and Agnes cast into the midst, behold the flames were suddenly extinguished.

This second miracle only enraged the people and the

Pagan priests all the more ; they still declared that she was a witch and a sorceress and must die. So other executioners were called, and one of them ascending the pile where the maiden stood with her arms meekly crossed gazing up steadfastly towards heaven, with one stroke cut off her head.

Then the parents and friends of Agnes took her body and buried it outside the city on the Nomentana way, on the spot where now stands the Church of *Sant' Agnese fuori le mura*."

Such is the story of *Sant' Agnese*, or "*the Lamb*," the favourite saint of the Roman women, as told by St. Jerome.

The interior of the church built in her honour is perfectly superb. It is constructed in the form of a Greek cross, and although very lofty is not large. The spandrels of the dome are covered with glowing frescoes, and precious coloured marbles, gilding, statues, and bassi rilievi profusely decorate the walls and altars. A charming statue of the saint executed by Ferrata, surmounts her altar; it is distinguished by that expression of chastity which forms her peculiar attribute: for we may consider St. Agnese as the Christian Diana, and accept her "*Lamb*" as more significant than the silver crescent of the Pagan goddess.

But the most interesting portion is the subterranean church including the remains of the *lupanar* of the *Circus Agonalis*. A dozen steps take one down into a vault supported by heavy pillars perfectly preserved, and the spot is pointed out on the ancient mosaic floor where St. Agnese was exposed.





CAMPUS MARTIUS—

JULIUS CÆSAR.



AGAIN we are into the midst of Pagan antiquity. I would now lead the stranger into the vicinity of the Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, near the modern *Campo di Fiori*, a portion of the Campus Martius originally presented to the Roman people by a famous courtesan, Acca Laurentia, of whose luxury, prodigality, and excesses, Macrobius gives us the details.

Avenues of plantain trees led to long Porticoes of dazzling marble peopled with statues, and adorned with glistening fountains that murmured among the ilex and myrtle groves, enshrouding stately Basilicas, colonnades, temples, and theatres ; a region of Pagan delight. Pre-eminent among these fair buildings rose the Theatre, Portico, and Curia of Pompey. Some of the remains of the arches and walls are said to be concealed by the Palazzo Pio, erected over them. The semi-circular

form of the theatre, and the inclination given to the ground by the sloping vaults, may be distinctly traced, according to Murray, by observing the position of the houses from the Church of *Santa Maria della Grotta Pinta*, to the *Piazza dei Satiri*.

The conqueror of Mithridates was the first Roman who erected a permanent theatre, such buildings having, up to his time, consisted only of temporary wooden structures always removed at the termination of the games. According to Pliny, even these were often raised at great cost, and were profusely embellished. To give a certain religious dignity to his work, Pompey united with it a temple, dedicated to *Venus Victrix*. The theatre was several times burnt, and successively restored by Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero. During the visit of Tiridates, king of Armenia, who came to receive his crown from the hand of Nero, that eccentric profligate was suddenly seized with a mad desire of exhibiting the riches of the Empire to his foreign guest. In four-and-twenty hours the vaulting, cornices, pilasters, in a word, the whole interior of the vast edifice, was gilt by his command. At the conclusion of the ceremonial in the Forum where Tiridates received the crown of Armenia as a fief from Nero, the royal personages adjourned to Pompey's theatre, where nothing could

exceed the wonder and astonishment of the Asiatic prince at beholding this spacious building lined with burnished gold, and blazing with countless millions of flambeaux, where sat 30,000 spectators. A sumptuous banquet awaited the princes, after which Nero, delighted at the opportunity of displaying his histrionic talents, appeared on the stage in the character of a charioteer, comedian, and buffoon. "His divine voice" echoed through the spacious hall, and he drove round the arena in his favourite livery.

But to return to earlier times ; when Pompey built his theatre he believed that the imperial crown was already within his grasp. No cost, no magnificence, was therefore too great to conciliate the affection of the people on whose support he reckoned. The whole affair was a grand electioneering job. Cæsar, whom as a rival he justly dreaded, was absent, proconsul in Spain ; even Crassus was gone, so Pompey had everything his own way. While his friends gave out that the safety of Rome required a dictator, he exhibited games in the new theatre on a grand scale. Six hundred mules trod the stage, and fifty elephants made their debut, while the future dictator, then a mature bridegroom of fifty, amused himself with his young wife, until the people should declare his election. The games succeeded

admirably, the people were enchanted, and Pompey was named sole consul. That was certainly much, but, in his opinion, six hundred mules and fifty elephants ought to have made him king.

Having by a brilliant exception obtained the honour of a triumph on his return from Asia, while yet but a simple knight, Pompey built near his theatre a temple dedicated to Equestrian Fortune. The Curia, a palace destined for the assembly of the Senate, was soon after added. It was surrounded, according to the splendid style of Roman architecture, by a portico, composed of arcades, supported by a hundred marble columns, and was embellished with statues and paintings. It opened on both sides into groves of plane trees, the fair space being refreshed by fountains and streams, and serving the threefold purpose of a *promenade* in summer for idlers, as a retreat for the spectators at the theatre when driven out by bad weather, and as a sculptured avenue, leading into the palatial Curia. Very grand must the senators have looked, as they lounged through these "walks of state" towards the Curia, their purple-edged togas sweeping along the marble floors. Propertius celebrates the summer beauties of the groves in some elegant verses. This portico is noted by historians as the place where Brutus sat

in judgment as Prætor on the morning after Cæsar's murder.

In the year 43 before the Christian era, Pompey had fallen by the hand of an Egyptian assassin, after his defeat at Pharsalia, and Julius Cæsar ruled in Rome. Cæsar was both a great warrior and a great statesman. The very clemency with which he treated his enemies after the death of his illustrious rival Pompey, left them defenceless, and evinced his diplomatic wisdom, as well as his natural clemency. It increased his popularity with the masses, and caused the republicans, his opponents, to be despised. In granting them life and liberty he signed the death-warrant of their cause—it died out with them.

As a legislator, nothing great or small escaped his observation. He had a remedy in his well-stored mind for every evil. Nothing came amiss to him; he even studied astronomy in Egypt, and composed a poem on the subject, making love to Cleopatra all the while. On his return to Rome, he found time to reform the calendar, which stood much in need of re-arrangement, the year having increased to 445 days. He adorned the city with temples and theatres, extended the Campus Martius to the opposite side of the Tiber, drained the Pontine marshes, erected a new harbour at

Ostia, and gave libraries to the people. Julius Cæsar was wonderful in being all things to all men, and, withal, excelling in everything he undertook.

A grateful country overwhelms him with honours ; he is appointed perpetual dictator, consul for ten years, hereditary pontiff ; he is proclaimed the "Liberator of his country, and Corrector of public manners," (perhaps the only public post he was not adapted to fill). Temples and altars are erected to him, sacrifices smoke in his honour, he has a consecrated bed of purple for his image, he is called Jupiter Julius, his statue stands in the Capitol among the tutelary gods ; in fact, he enjoys every privilege of celestial Jove.

Yet, spite of this excessive homage, there is something rotten in the state, something suspicious, the brooding as of a suppressed volcano, for when he goes to sup with Cicero, Cæsar is escorted by two thousand soldiers !

Remembering the powerful republican party headed by Brutus, who only *tolerated* but never acquiesced in his rule, he committed a fatal error in not preserving the appearance of liberty. The people were his slaves, and they knew it. Augustus, his successor, ruled as absolutely in Rome as his uncle, but he scrupulously preserved the forms of a Republic. Even when addressed by the Senate in a body, Cæsar did not rise to receive them.

He took no pains to conceal the contempt with which he regarded them, saying continually, and without reserve, that "*the Republic was nothing, a name, a shadow, a body without a soul; that Sylla was a fool to abdicate, that he, Cæsar, expected to be treated in future with more veneration, and that his words were to be regarded henceforth as laws.*" Nothing could be more indiscreet than such language; it was repeated, exaggerated, commented on; at last it came to be said among the multitude, that Cæsar was about to transfer the seat of government from Rome to Alexandria.

There are some grandly dramatic scenes in Cæsar's life associated with the Campus Martius, as well as with Pompey's pile of stately edifices, so tragically immortalised as the scene of his murder. When Cæsar returned from Alexandria, he endeavoured to establish public tranquillity in the city, torn by dissensions under the government of the drunken Antony and the tribune Dolabella. After enacting various laws, and legislating between the contending parties, the debtors and the creditors (the old grievance that drove the ancient plebs to the Mons Sacer under a new face), Cæsar, having not yet terminated his wars, desired to depart. The veteran legion refused to stir. He had promised them a gratuity, which they indignantly declared was insufficient. Already they had

left their camp and entered the walls of Rome, pillaging and killing all they met. They were mad. The predicament was awkward, but Cæsar is unmoved. He declares that he will meet the rebels in the Campus Martius, and spite of the entreaties of his friends, he goes.

The riotous troops rushed into the tribunal where Cæsar, seated on the curule chair, frowning horribly, awaits them. "*What means this tumult?*" cries he. "We demand our discharge," reply the soldiers. "*Your demand shall be granted,*" replies Cæsar, "*and when I have conquered other nations with other legions, all arrears and rewards shall be discharged.*" Having thus spoken he rises and retires. He is entreated to add a few words he refuses; still more vehemently implored, he again mounts the tribunal. "Quirites" (citizens), he exclaims. "*We are soldiers,*" shout the legions, with one voice, "*not citizens. Lead us into Africa, decimate us, punish us as you will, but we are your soldiers!*"

It was long before Cæsar would yield; long before he would consent to allow them to be killed for his glory's sake by the Numidians.

In this scene we have a specimen of that *fortune* of which he so often boasted. "*Veni, vidi, vici,*" was his motto. He had conquered a whole army with that one magical word, "*Quirites.*"

Cæsar was a real patrician, and was proud of his descent. "*My grandmother*," said he, in the famous oration he pronounced over his aunt, "*was descended from Ancus Martius; the Julii, my family, are descended from Venus, therefore our race can boast the consecrated power of anointed kings, and the majesty of gods, masters of kings.*"

It would seem that Venus, the Goddess of Fortune, his ancestress, patronised her descendant, and endowed him with all her gifts. He, naturally vain and proud of these advantages, is marvellously delicate, has white hands, and a smooth skin, and wears his cincture loose, all which follies do not prevent his being the greatest man of that great age, when the dying Republic strove with that young athlete the youthful Empire. Cæsar knew and understood the position; he did not follow, he led the changeful spirit of the times. He understood that, not to be crushed by the coming revolution, he must head the storm; he must be either the slave or the master. He sees but one place worthy of his genius, and that place he will have, though he wade through rivers, oceans, of Rome's best blood to obtain it.

But it is vulgar to shed blood, any fool can do that. Cæsar disdains such means, he tames, rather than slays, his opponents.

Yet Cæsar, when his rule was established, and while

sojourning at Rome in times of peace, could not forget the old trade. He delighted in scenes of bloodshed, all in the way of amusement however; an example sufficiently appreciated and followed by the Emperors his successors. During his life, the Campus Martius was at various times the scene of the most wanton slaughter. His famous Naumachia was constructed within its enclosure.

Returning to Rome after having triumphed in Spain and in Gaul, he determined to enliven the Quirites with a series of festivals, worthy of his victories and of the glory of the Roman name. Troops of gladiators exhibited their prowess in the various quarters of the city; actors gave representations in every language; thousands were attracted to the various circuses, to witness the Trojan games, combats of wild beasts, and a battle between men and elephants. But above all, the Naumachia near the Tiber was opened. In this immense basin, fed by the classic river, a hundred vessels, triremes, biremes, and quadriremes, divided into two fleets, and manned by eighteen thousand men, occupied the extremities of the lake, one fleet representing the Trojans, the other the Egyptians. Tacitus says the crews were all malefactors; in other words, they were slaves, prisoners of war, and gladiators, forced to sacrifice their lives for the good pleasure of the people. In the fear that these unhappy

men, emboldened by their numbers, and aware of the inevitable fate awaiting them, might form some plan of revolt, the edge of the vast basin was lined with troops, prepared to repulse them sword in hand.

At length, all being ready, Cæsar's tall figure appears. You might recognise him at any distance by the crown of laurel, which he always wore to hide his baldness, the little hair remaining at the back of his head being carefully combed forward to conceal this defect, any allusion to which caused him great annoyance. Of all the honours, says Suetonius, decreed him by the Senate, he esteemed none so much as the privilege of wearing a laurel wreath at all times. You might recognise great Cæsar, too, by his graceful carriage, his shapely limbs, his well-trimmed beard, his black and piercing eyes, fair complexion, and triumphal habit ornamented with a rich fringe falling over his hands; for in his general style of dress he was reproached as being too luxurious and effeminate for such a mighty warrior.

Surrounded by officers and preceded by lictors bearing laurel-wreathed fasces, he advances towards the magnificent chair of state prepared for him. According to his general custom, he pays no attention to what is passing around him, but is wrapt in thought. A general murmur of discontent from the troops stationed round the Nau-

machia, arouses him however ; he looks up, and from all sides loud complaints salute him. "Of what use to us," exclaim some of the boldest among the soldiers, "is this vain and ridiculous expense ? Are we the better for all these shows ? Give us rather the money, great Cæsar, that we may share it together, and be happy."

The dictator, who a moment before, wrapt in his embroidered laticlave, looked almost like a woman, upon hearing this knits his brows, and casts a withering look upon the malcontents. A moment more and he has darted from his chair of state, and is among them. Impelled by ungovernable rage at their insolence, he seizes one of the foremost with his own hand, and orders him away to instant death. The rest stand back aghast and silent ; the odds are great, thousands against one man, but that one man was born "to threaten and command."

Order being re-established, Cæsar slowly and deliberately returns to his place, arranging as he goes the folds of his toga, and replacing the golden fringes over his hands.

The two fleets now row by in review before him. "*Cæsar, morituri te salutant,*" exclaim, in shrill chorus, the sailors, as they pass beside where he sits. The echoes of the lake wake to this strange salute, and to

the crash of the vessels as they defile by. The two fleets range themselves, fifty on either side, the signal is given, the combatants raise a general shout, the oars rise and fall in cadence, the troubled waters surge and rage, the very air is agitated as they close, fast grappling each other. Stones, pitch, beams, lighted missiles, javelins, arrows, fly around. The sun is darkened by the smoke and mist, horribly illuminated here and there by darting streaks of flame. The sharp prows of iron affixed to each vessel strike each other with horrible clashings, the waters tremble, blood flows in streams, corpses are piled upon the decks; the lake is filled with the dead and floating bodies of those whose vessels have foundered. The living swim towards the shore; vain hope, they are driven back by the immovable, unpitying legions,—death meets them everywhere. Yes, they must die, as they have said, for Cæsar.

A horrible massacre still continues on board those boats which still remain afloat, the water is tinged with blood flowing from the ensanguined decks, they fight on for a time with a desperate courage, until at length the disabled vessels sink heavily, one by one, into the surging waters of the sullen lake. Few even of the ships remain. As for the eighteen thousand men they have vanished—they are nearly all dead; they saluted

Cæsar, and they have died to do him pleasure. Is he gratified? What is he doing? Sitting luxuriously lolling in his chair of state reading letters. From the moment the combat began until now, he has never raised his eyes from the papers which he holds in his hand. Now, when the vessels are all sunk, and the men nearly all dead; now, when the ghastly scene of devastation appears in all its horror, he raises his eyes and looks around with an absent glance, then, rising suddenly, he grants their lives to the miserable remnant that remain, and withdraws. The people who loved the dictator sincerely, were displeased; not at the massacre, or the blood, or the expense, for they were already so far degenerated from their Republican ancestors as to call out "*Panem et Circenses*," but because their favourite Cæsar read letters all the while he sat there, disdaining, as it seemed, the spectacle. He disdained the splendid pageant—his thoughts were elsewhere—and they murmured loudly as he passed out. They fear him not, for as yet the Roman Quirites are free and bold, and speak in their assemblies, and by the voices of their tribunes, somewhat as their fathers did of old.

Yet, although loved by the people, feared by his enemies, overwhelmed with honours, and possessed of absolute power, a dark foreshadowing of his end seemed

to haunt the lofty soul of Cæsar. Yet he did not fear, for he was incapable of fear. He despised the people he ruled, and those about him, too profoundly to allow them to move him. Precisely at this very time, shortly before his murder, he dismissed his Spanish guard. "*It is better to fall at once,*" he replied to the expostulations of his friends, "*than to live in dread.*" "*That I should die,*" added he, "*matters little to me, it is the Republic that will suffer. All my desires, both of ambition and of glory, have been accomplished, but the Republic at my death will be plunged into endless calamities. There will be a worse civil war than before.*" When warned against Antony and Dolabella, he answered, "*That he cared little for those merry faces, it was the pale ones he dreaded.*" Brutus was singularly pale.

Doubtless the eastern prophecies of a coming Messiah who was to rule over all nations, backed as they were by the local oracles of the Sibyls, materially affected the imagination of Cæsar. These vague floating legends, these ancient traditions (the Jewish prophecies especially), pointing to the very time and century, seemed to mark Cæsar as the man, at least he might think so. But the coming Messiah was to be a king: the Pythian oracle, the Egyptian priest, the Jewish prophet, all agreed in this. Now Cæsar yet wanted the mere vulgar

title, the outward and visible trappings of royalty. It was a name odiously unpopular in Rome ever since the expulsion of the Tarquins, and strangely connected in the popular mind with the detestable crime that caused Lucretia's death. Notwithstanding all this, Cæsar, who is aware of the national prejudice, will be king, and he has friends unwise enough to second him. Antony, the drunken reveller, Cæsar's evil genius, walks by the side of the imperial litter, and calls out, as he passes through the Forum, "Long live the king!" The people are silent, so Cæsar is obliged for the present to say, "*He is not king, but Cæsar.*" Still there was the desire, the evident hankering after the forbidden fruit, especially at the Lupercal, that wild bacchanalian festival, when men ran naked through the streets. Antony drunk, and naked too, a very Silenus in his coarse revelry, lifted up in the arms of the people as high as the rostrum where Cæsar is seated,—offers him a diadem. Warned by the murmurs that are heard around, Cæsar refuses it, but as Shakespeare makes Cæsar say,—“He put it by thrice, every time gentler than the other, but to my thinking he was very loath to lay his fingers off it.”

Cæsar by no means understood playing the game of kingcraft like his nephew, the wary Augustus; his nature was superior to such mean dissembling. He ruled with

absolute power, and he made no secret of it. At last, finding that the people would not have a *bonâ fide* king, he magnanimously sent the crown as a present to his brother, celestial Jupiter, at the Capitol. Yet his statues bore the imperial fillet, and this alone was enough to irritate the people, for to their minds there was something absolutely sacred in that half yard of ribbon !

This playing at royalty cost Cæsar his life. Brutus and the Republican party had submitted to his rule, had acquiesced in his title of dictator, but they could not abide the notion of actual, avowed royalty. They could not stand by and see their beloved Republic morally murdered before their eyes ; they would rather assassinate Cæsar at once. Awful warnings and terrible omens were not wanting to announce the coming catastrophe.

On the Ides of March in that same year, 44 before Christ, the Senate was to assemble within the Curia, in Pompey's Theatre. The night before was heavy with portents. "Horrid sights were seen by the watch, a lioness whelped in the streets, and the graves yawned and yielded up their dead. Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, which drizzled blood upon the Capitol. The noise of battle hurtled in the air ;—horses did neigh, and dying men did groan, and ghosts did shriek and squall about the streets."

Calphurnia was troubled in her sleep, she dreamt that the front of their palace had fallen down, that Cæsar was killed in her arms, and warningly implored him not to stir abroad that day, but he replied, "Cæsar shall forth, the things that threatened me ne'er looked upon my back."

When Cæsar went out in the morning from his house on the Sacred Way towards the Capitol, the same sooth-sayer, Spurinna by name, who had already warned him of impending danger, crossed his path. "The ides of March are come," quoth Cæsar. "Ay, Cæsar, but not past." Artemidorus stood ready with a letter, containing every particular of the conspiracy against him, and the list of his enemies, headed by Brutus, but Cæsar put it by, mixing it with other papers which he held in his hand, saying, "What touches ourselves we will read last." All warning was in vain; Atropos' fatal scissors already touched the thread of his brilliant life.

When he entered the Curia built by his rival Pompey, the master of the world is unwittingly surrounded by his deadliest enemies. Pale-faced Brutus is there, and beside him Cassius, the two prætors, with dark and threatening looks heavy as stormy night, and Casca, and Tribonius, and Cinna, and Metellus, and Cimber bending the pliant knee before great Cæsar. When the word had passed round that all was ready, under the plea of

“low-crook’d courtesies and spaniel fawning,” all the conspirators press round him as he sits enthroned on the curule chair robed in his ample toga. Alas! poor Cæsar! a moment more and that well-remembered mantle is jagged with assassins’ daggers! See, he is surrounded, enveloped, pierced with innumerable blows. Cassius’ dagger first went through, then came the rent made by envious Casca, the well-beloved Brutus, too, stabbed deep, “and, as he plucked his cursed steel away, mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it!”

“ This was the most unkindest cut of all ;
For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors’ arms,
Quite vanquished him ; then burst his mighty heart,
And in his mantle muffling up his face,
E’en at the base of Pompey’s statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell ! ”

According to Suetonius, immediately before his murder, the tomb of Capys, one of the earliest kings of Alba and founder of Capua, was discovered by some slaves, and within it was found a bronze tablet, on which was engraven these words in Greek,—“When the bones of Capys are laid open, the descendant of Julius shall fall by the hand of his friends, and his death be avenged by the troubles of

Italy." The horses, too, which Cæsar had used at the passage of the Rubicon, and had consecrated and turned loose into pleasant pastures, abstained from their food and shed tears. Suetonius says, that Cæsar, being indisposed on the fatal morning of his death, hesitated if he should go abroad, and delayed at home until the fifth hour. When he took his seat in the Curia, Cimber Tullius approached him as if to request a favour, but Cæsar refusing to listen, Cimber seized his toga with both his hands, at which Cæsar cried out, "but this is violence." At the same moment Cassius wounded him in the throat, and Cæsar caught his arm piercing him with his poniard, and was about to rush forward, when another and another blow prevented him. Seeing himself enclosed by weapons on all sides, he covered his head with his toga, extending his left hand to cover his legs and his body with the drapery, so that he might fall decently; thus he received twenty-three wounds, without uttering either a groan or a word. The senators around, ignorant of the conspiracy, were too much overcome by horror, astonishment, and fear either to fly to assist him, or even to speak; they sat transfixed.

When he was quite dead and every one had escaped, three slaves placed his body on a litter and carried it away to his own house under the Palatine; one of his

arms hanging out all the while as they passed through the city.

Brutus was induced, either by the fear of the people or by a sentiment of remorse towards his patron and kindest benefactor, to consent to a public funeral. The body of Cæsar was therefore borne into the Tribune, and an image of wax exactly resembling the mangled corpse was exposed, by the command of Antony, on a bed of purple and gold. The whole city assembled to hear Antony pronounce the funeral eulogy, which he prefaced by reciting all the decrees of the Senate laudatory of Cæsar and his exploits. He then read aloud the oath taken by all the conspirators to defend the person of Cæsar. By degrees, as he saw the feelings of his audience awakened, he warmed in his discourse, and at length drawing aside the purple drapery which concealed the image, he displayed every wound, traced them with his fingers, told by whom they had been inflicted, saying little but touching every heart, and weeping abundantly.

The people became maddened with indignation, especially when they were made aware of the testament left by Cæsar. They talked wildly of burning the body in the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, or in the Curia, where the crime was committed. At length it was decided that it should be burnt in the Campus Martius, where the multi-

tude rushed in tumultuous crowds to cast their offerings on the funeral pile. No procession was formed, no order observed—it was impossible. The benches used by the senators in the neighbouring tribune, the tables from the different stalls, arms, bracelets, medals, clothes, female ornaments, toys, all and everything was accumulated on the pile, to which two slaves bearing torches set fire.

And now two thousand years after, standing by the splendid church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, we tread the very soil where this world-tragedy was enacted ! It is in Rome alone the mind can realize these strangely distinct visions of the mighty past, weighing down and obliterating the present. Read here, the page of history assumes a local interest at once graphic and vivid. Every association, every recollection, every study is called forth, and we stand on these old stones transfixed at the gigantic shadows that pass unbidden before us.

A still more living witness of this great catastrophe exists at the Palazzo Spada, a few streets off. There stands the very statue of Pompey, before which Cæsar, by a strange and awful retribution, fell prostrate in death. Placed during Pompey's life in the Senate-house which he had erected, the statue was afterwards raised, by order of Augustus, on a double arch or gateway of marble opposite the grand entrance of Pompey's Theatre.

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During the convulsions of the Gothic wars it fell, or was thrown down, and for many ages lay undiscovered among the ruins. At length disinterred between the foundations of two houses, it came into the possession of Cardinal Spada. It is of white marble, and admirably sculptured. It stands in an attitude of stern command, "the austere form of naked majesty," one hand extended, as though calling on passing centuries to approach, and meditate on the strange vicissitudes of all sublunary events.

Of the two rivals, Pompey and Cæsar, who disputed the empire of the world, one, conquered by the other, falls by the ignoble sword of an Egyptian slave; the other, murdered by his best beloved friend, falls at the foot of his rival's statue. In blood they had lived, and by violence they died. Thus does the justice of the Almighty, with unerring hand, right the balance of the universe!





THE VIA TRIUMPHALIS.

EVERY stranger visiting Rome is aware that the Trasteverini claim the distinction of being the sole existing remnants of the ancient Romans; their features are said to be more statuesque, their language more ancient, and their allusions and proverbial expressions more classical than those in use among the mixed races on the opposite side of the Tiber. I cannot say I was struck with any of these characteristic differences, nor did I notice any classical peculiarities. They seem to me, to speak precisely the same vernacular, coarse, loud, and unmusical, common to all parts of Rome.

But one portion of the Trastevere must ever be pregnant with historic interest, as recalling scenes as glorious and as gorgeous as even the Forum itself. Here was situated the Via Triumphalis, along whose broad stones passed the triumphs of the victorious generals, emperors, and consuls, bringing power, fame, glory, the very world itself bound in chains to Rome.

Beside the Ælian bridge, now the Ponte Sant' Angelo, where stand those " breezy maniacs " of Bernini parentage, is a church called Santa Maria in Traspontina. It is a church neither large, nor grand, nor beautiful, looking, to the common eye, like a hundred others blocking up every corner of this ecclesiastical capital. Yet a memory dwells within those walls, so sacred, so solemn, that even face to face with one of the grandest images of the past, I must pause to record it. You enter, and in one of the lateral chapels are shown by a limping *sacristano*, two pillars of white marble veined with red. To these pillars, the Apostles Paul and Peter are said to have been fastened, before undergoing the flagellation that always preceded the execution of slaves or strangers condemned to die. Not that the apostles suffered here, on this spot, but those two antique columns once standing in the Comitium in the Forum, where the punishment was inflicted, came in process of time to be moved into this church. Now passing into the porch of this barren-looking building, let us cast our eyes around. There is nothing suggestive,—shabby houses, dark streets, stalls of wine and fruit, the long façade of the Hospital of Santo Spirito, perchance a fountain, with the huge dome of St. Peter's towering over the adjacent roofs. Yet,

where I stand, was once the centre of the far-famed *Territorium triumphale*, extending from the Tiber, by the mole of Adrian, to Monte Mario with its olive groves and diadem of pines, back to the Vatican where the serpents crawled upon the sun-burnt rocks in early times. A plain renowned in the history of the pride and pomp of Rome, heavy with the sighs and groans of mankind!

In order to claim the high honour of a triumph, the general, usually of consular rank, must have taken many cities by assault, gained several pitched battles, made a certain number of prisoners, enlarged the territory of the Republic, not suffered any defeat during the campaign, have improved each victory in the highest possible degree, and have killed at least five thousand enemies. Such were the requirements of the Senate, in the virtuous days of Rome's power. Afterwards, a triumph became but a vain and empty show, and was granted to any imperial madman who desired it; to Caligula for visiting Gaul, where he collected sea-shells on the coast and cut down trees; and to Nero, for singing at the Olympic games to his guitar.

When the martial prowess of a general was deemed by the Commonwealth deserving of a triumph at the

conclusion of a campaign, he encamped under the walls of Rome, accompanied by his victorious legions. From thence he despatched a letter, wreathed with laurel, to the Senate, following up this written request by presenting himself in person, to plead his cause in a studied oration, the fathers assembling for that purpose without the walls, it being written in the early laws, that no candidate for a triumph could enter Rome or pass the threshold of the *Pomerium*, without forfeiting all right to this distinction. Without the city walls, under the sculptured portico of some magnificent temple, the Senate deliberated, robed in their white and purple gowns. If the request was granted, the grandest and saddest preparations were instantly commenced for the celebration of this sumptuous rite; at once national, religious, and warlike, appealing to every passion of the Quirites.

Long before the sun had broken over the Alban mount, the city shook itself from slumber; the palaces, the arcades, the streets, the Campus Martius, the innumerable baths were filled with eager crowds; every temple was thrown open, every altar smoked with fragrant incense. Crowds blocked up every avenue, the banks of the Tiber were fringed with multitudes, the bridges groaned under the accumulated weight of

passengers, while echoing from all parts, from Lucullus' Gardens on the Collis Hortulorum to the Vatican, from the Janiculum to the Palatine, came the soul-stirring cry, "*Io triumphe, Io triumphe.*"

Without the walls all was alive and astir with martial life. The soldiers, as soon as the first beams of the sun had tipped the distant crest of the Sabine hills, habited in silken tunics and wearing crowns of freshly gathered laurels, formed into companies and legions, and approached the gates of the city, where a splendid banquet was spread for them by order of the commanding general. On the occasion of the joint triumph of Vespasian and Titus over prostrate Judæa, of which Josephus has left so ample and vivid a chronicle, the two Emperors, having presided in the Senate held within the Portico of Octavia (built by Augustus in memory of his sister, and decorated with the finest specimens of Grecian art), received the congratulations of the patricians and the court. They then proceeded to the triumphal gate, where they joined in the repast spread for the soldiers, offered sacrifices to the gods, and invested themselves with the triumphal ornaments. Martial music sounded, the trumpets swelled their brazen throats, and amidst shouts of rejoicing the procession set forth.

First was borne a wondrous collection of carved work in gold, silver, and ivory, with stuffs and vestments of purple and many colours, fresh from the Syrian looms—the spoils of Jerusalem's great Temple and the Jewish palaces. Next were displayed the jewels, crowns, and diadems captured from the treasury. All these riches were borne by legionaries, habited in tunics of purple embroidered with gold. Then came hundreds of statues, sculptured in every metal, all of exquisite workmanship, followed by troops of strange and unknown animals from the sandy deserts bordering Egypt, and the richly-wooded valleys of Judæa, elephants also, and dromedaries, bravely harnessed and caparisoned, as when they bore Eastern tyrants forth to battle. Afterwards appeared a countless multitude of prisoners and slaves, a heavy-eyed, drooping throng, who advanced with lingering steps and sullen looks, as though ill brooking this crowning insult of Roman pride in parading them and their bitter woes to grace a triumph. These Jews are all fated to become slaves. No hope for them. The sun, the multitude, the merry cries, the floating banners, the jewelled crowns torn from the brow of their native kings—every object is fraught with a fresh pang to their wounded spirit, pangs recalling the regal splendour of their once beauteous city—her glorious

Temple fallen, her walls furrowed by the plough—and reminding all of their approaching death or certain sufferings; long labour in the galleys, or to grace a public spectacle in combat with each other, being the mildest sentence. All around breathed fervid joy and triumph, all, save that sombre, sullen throng, who had fought so long and so desperately to keep their holy city—fought against pestilence, and fire, and famine, and the sword—undergone such horrors—fed on their own children, on each other, rather than yield; and now, behold their long array, swelling the ranks of a Roman triumph, where thousands of curious eyes peer on them, and mock them as they pass, those miserable Jews.

After the prisoners are borne the representations of the conquered cities on the brawny shoulders of stalwart legionaries, who, strong as they were, could scarcely support the weight; then came life pictures of the battles, and sieges, and assaults, true and horrible, painted in colours, as it were, of blood—a dismal catalogue of death and corpses, conflagrations, famine, falling walls, bursting mines, ruined towers engulfing prostrate multitudes, the sack of Jerusalem, the spoiling her awful Temple—all are imaged there to delight the savage Romans, and feed their bestial appetite for horrors.

Next follow the *spolia opima*—the decorations of the

Penetralia, the Sanctum Sanctorum of that Temple behind whose mystic veil no mortal save the anointed high priest had ever dared to penetrate with hope of life ; here they are carried in the glare of day, under an Italian sky, profaned, prostituted to the vulgar gaze of Pagan Romans to scoff and jeer at. The brazen statues of Abraham, Sarah, and the kings descended from the line of David ; the sacred utensils of the altar, untouched before by any unconsecrated hand, are carried on the heads of laurel-crowned legionaries, whose rich garments sweep the ground ; the table of massive gold for the shew-bread, the silver trumpets that sounded the Jubilee, the very veil, unutterably sacred, that divided the Temple, the seven branched candlesticks, also of gold, and the tables of the law—those awful tables, first given by the Almighty's hand on Mount Sinai.

Next appears sunk in sullen grief, "conquered though not subdued," Simon, the son of Gorias, habited in a black robe, laden with heavy chains, that clanked at every step—he who had defended Jerusalem with such frantic courage, fighting on desperately, savagely, unheeding the humane calls and injunctions of Titus to surrender ere the legions became maddened past recall by a too obstinate resistance. Simon knew that he was destined to a speedy death as soon as the procession

reached the Capitol ; but he strode on, as haughty on the brink of the grave as he had been when commanding on his native walls.

Then there is a sudden hush, a deep silent murmur, as of the pent-up breath of thousands, anxious, expectant, joyous, the overflowing tide of humanity ebbing to and fro with a hollow sound ; every eye is strained, every sense quickened, for the Romans, well versed in the programme of these triumphs, know that when the *spolia opima* have passed, the Emperors will appear—laurel-crowned Vespasian, and his royal son Titus, gentle, and well beloved for his many virtues. The statues of Victory, of ivory and gold, come first, and then behold the victors, father and son, mounted on two golden chariots ; and as they appear, the mighty pent-up masses of that huge crowd burst into one uproarious cry of *Io triumphe*, echoing to the very vaults of heaven ! Vespasian is now an old man, fat, grey-haired, and wrinkled ; but Titus is resplendent in all the brilliancy of a virtuous and well-spent youth. To enhance the dignity of their appearance religion is called in, and the Emperors, by a pious fiction, are supposed, on that high festival, to represent Jupiter himself, “supremely good and great,” thus heightening by a mystic symbolism, the majesty of their presence. On the occasion of a triumph, every

victorious general was dressed in the classic tunic proper to the Olympian god, their bodies being coloured vermillion, in imitation of his venerated image enshrined in the Capitol. The very chariots in which they rode are harnessed with four milk-white steeds abreast, in imitation of Jove's heavenly chariot, an honour accorded to none, save by the express decree of the Conscript Fathers.

Titus, standing on his triumphal car, shone out a very god in the eyes of the assembled Quirites. Again the cries of *Io triumphe* rent the air, and went booming to the mountain depths that gird the plains of Latium, as he appeared, his face and hands coloured vermillion, his purple toga bordered with gold draping his manly form, his head crowned with immortal laurels, and his arms covered with military bracelets that clanked and rang almost as loudly as the heavy chains of the wretched Simon. Titus bore an ivory sceptre surmounted by an eagle. The chariot on which he rode was round and open behind, resembling in shape that in which victorious Achilles drove round the walls of Troy, dragging in his wake the mangled body of Hector, which, when the gentle Andromache, looking out from a high tower, beheld, she swooned and fell.

Titus's car of ivory and bronzed gold, set with jewels, glistened as it passed. It was drawn by nodding steeds,

who, like their master, were wreathed with laurel. Beside him, mounted on a prancing war-horse, rides his brother, Domitian, together with the most illustrious of Rome's proudest citizens, wearing olive garlands, and robed in white togas, guiding the milk-white horses of the triumphal car with golden reins. Behind him, resting on the step of the chariot, stands a slave, whose office it is to whisper in his ear,—“*Cæsar hominem te esse memento.*” Here was the death's head of the festival, the handwriting on the wall, the one bitter drop envenoming all. Yes, Cæsar, glorious, deified as thou art, thou must die like the vilest slave that stretches his throat to proclaim thy triumph. Thou art a man, though thou “paint an inch thick” to imitate great Jove; and even now, while thou passest in thy glory, who knows but that the funeral urn is not already carved that is destined to hold thy ashes!

The army follows, making the street resound with songs of victory, broken here and there by a spiteful satire or smart pleasantry at the generals' expense, all license being permitted on this great Saturnalian holiday. And then the crowd close in, a white-robed multitude, vast, innumerable, every voice raised in tumultuous shouts, and cries of extatic joy.

The procession enters the city by the Triumphal Gate, situated on the banks of the classic stream that

bore up Horatius on that fatal day when the Tuscan assailants, rushing on the bridge, but for his desperate valour would have entered Rome ; that bore up Clelia, and her maiden fellows, flying from Porsenna and his Etruscans ; Old Father Tiber, "to whom the Romans pray." All traces of this gate, garlanded with such glorious memories, are irrevocably gone, but it is said to have stood on the same spot now occupied by the Hospital of Santo Spirito, which you may see fronting the river as you pass the Ponte Sant' Angelo. Beside the gate, the *Pons triumphalis* spanned the rapid stream. This bridge, too, is gone, sunk into the deep river below ; but when the stream is low, dried up by summer heats, the foundation of the piers may yet be seen in the yellow waters, and a certain disturbance observed in the current, shows where the massed up ruins still lie embedded.

Over the bridge they pass—prisoners, banners, crowns, elephants, emperors, citizens, and laurel-wreathed legions, as grand a company as ever old Phœbus shone upon—on to the Campus Martius, planted with groves and tufted thickets, and decorated with porticoes, temples, circuses, and fountains. From thence, passing through what is now the thickest portion of the modern city, they follow the Triumphal Way on to the Velabrum, in

early days a stagnant marshy lake, where weak infants were exposed, and over which the early Romans passed to and fro in little boats, when business carried them to the silent Aventine, where the golden roofs of Juno's magnificent Temple glistened. But when Titus and Vespasian passed the Velabrum, the Forum Boarium been erected, in what was then the busiest and densest portion of the city, where merchants buy and sell under the shadow of the Brazen Bull, set up in the centre, where the classic *canaglia* gather under the arches of the Cloaca Maxima, and where the arch of Janus Quadrifrons, with its four-faced arches, its sculptured niches, cornices and mouldings shines out resplendent. Now solitary and mouldering in inarticulate ruin, this region has returned to its original solitude. The Forum has disappeared, and the marble arch, its niches empty, its sculptured mouldings gone, totters to a slow decay.

But to return. Passing the Forum Boarium, and the great Circus spreading away behind the Palatine, the procession turns to the left, by the Circus Veteres, between the Cælian and the Palatine, to where the *Via Sacra*, avened with superb temples, statues and shrines, leads onward in a straight line to the Forum. Along the well-worn pavement of the *Via Sacra*, on those very

stones on which we, two thousand years afterwards, still come and go, the victors approach the Forum, that heart and hearth-stone of Roman liberty and glory. The Forum slowly passed, they mount the steep ascent of the Capitol by the road to the left, coming down from the Tarpeian Rock, the Clivus Capitolinus. See already the banners flutter on the sacred mount, the long lines defile up the hill, the multitude ascend the marble steps, and soon reach the triple colonnade, blazing with molten gold, of that most transcendant Temple, the Pagan sanctuary, inhabited by Capitoline Jove. Here they pause ; but as the throng press under its pillared portico, there is a sudden silence. Every eye is fixed on Simon, son of Gorias, the dauntless defender of the Jewish Temple. His hour is come, and he is now to die. See, the lictors advance bearing the deadly fasces, wreathed with laurel ; they approach, they surround him, they bear him away, his black robe trailing on the ground, his chains clanking horribly as he moves. First, he is beaten, severely beaten, within the enclosure of the Forum, then he is borne away bleeding, half dead, below, to the foot of the rock, where the horrible Mamertine dungeon opens, upon whose topmost crest the gorgeous Temple stands before whose gilded portals the Emperors' chariots halt. Strange and horrible con-

trast in this day of savage joy ; on the same spot the deified Cæsars mounting to earthly glory habited like gods, and their gallant prisoner borne away to die !

Meanwhile, Simon, driven before the ferocious lictors, is precipitated through a narrow hole. Into the *robur Tullianum* all strangers at Rome have looked with dread, for strange to say, after so many centuries, the dungeon yet remains, and even now breathes an atmosphere of death. Simon is cast down into the gloomy cell, where Jugurtha starved, and Catiline's companions were slain, where Sejanus perished, and where the Apostle Peter called forth a crystal spring to baptize his believing jailors, Processus and Martinus. Into that yawning pit Simon falls ; below waits the executioner, whose sharp axe speedily finishes what yet remains of life ; a cord is passed round his neck, his body is dragged away to the *Gemoniæ*, and finally committed to the current of the Tiber.

During this time the triumphant Emperors slowly advance nearer the Temple. Its form is a parallelogram, two hundred feet in length, and surrounded on three sides by a magnificent marble colonnade. The façade turned towards the south-east is composed of a peristyle, where a triple range of columns support a majestic front surmounted by statues. Lateral colonnades extend from separate porticoes. Above the principal door golden

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helmets are ranged ; among them the shield of Asdrubal is conspicuous. Beneath, military trophies hang on the pillars, shields and swords, helmets and axes, rusted by the blood of the enemies of Rome ; the prows of Carthaginian vessels, Gaulish helmets, the sword of Brennus, the spoils of Pyrrhus, the standards of the Epirots, the arms of the Ligurians—all offerings to the national shrine. The steps are of rare marble, the doors of gilt bronze. The interior is divided into three naves, forming separate shrines, where Juno and Minerva were also honoured. The *Ædícula*, or sanctuary, of Jupiter literally blazes with gold, the walls and the roof shine like a firmament of fire ; the image of the god, painted of a vermillion colour, is seated, a toga of purple clothes its limbs, a crown of gold glitters on its brow, in one hand appears a lance, the other holds the symbolic thunderbolt.

In the meantime night has come on. From early morn until shadowy eve has that vast procession dragged its huge splendour through the city, and now the coming darkness but opens a more glittering scene. Forty elephants loaded with candelabra, the lights dancing and flickering among the ranges of pillars supporting the triple portico, light the lofty Capitol, turning darkness into a brighter day. A noble idea those forty illuminated elephants, surrounded by millions of flam-

beaux sparkling among the countless arcades and porticoes of Jove's great Temple, and mocking with their brilliancy the colder splendours of the night. Greeted by this blaze of light, the Emperors descend from their golden chariots, and prostrate on their knees, mount the marble steps leading to the sanctuary. They enter the triple naves dividing the vast extent of that fane, where the accumulated spoils of peoples, kingdoms, empires, have been lavished ; on whose doors of gilded bronze, and upon whose columns hang the trophies of the mighty slain, the enemies of Rome. They enter, and they pause—but for a moment—for see, a licitor advancing through the pillared aisle bows in the dust as he pronounces the expected message : “ *Actum est,*” it is finished ; Simon is dead, the wretched captive, and the Emperors may rejoice ! Then loud and mighty shouts rend the lofty halls, Jupiter echoing to his brother-gods peans of triumph over the slain prisoner, as though some mighty deed were done in slaying a chained captive. Vespasian and Titus now penetrate into the sanctum of Jupiter, where the image of the god, to whom they address a prayer of thanksgiving and praise, sits enthroned on a high altar. Then Titus approaching the idol, places in his hand a branch of laurel, and taking off his glittering diadem, he dedicates

it with all that is most rare and costly among the spoils to the god. Victims are brought, the priests advance, the altars smoke with choicest hecatombs, and a splendid banquet is spread under the vast colonnades of the golden Temple, where the triumphant Cæsars entertain the senate and the court ; while all the while Simon's cold corpse floats downwards, borne by the rapid current towards the sea, under the cold glimmer of the silvery moon, a dismal witness of Rome's savage revenge, even on this day of universal joy.

The assembled multitude, who throughout the livelong day have followed the victor's chariot, now retire also to their homes, where a festival is spread for every family according to their means. All Rome rejoices in a feverish delicious holiday. Nor are the soldiers forgotten. Enormous largesses are presented by the victorious generals, raw meat distributed, and the festive tables groan for successive days under the accumulated good cheer. Falernian and the choicest Cyprian wine, measured in amphoræ, is served out of immense barrels to the whole army.

I will glance at one or two other triumphs in earlier times, interesting from the names of the great heroes who led them, and remarkable from the importance of the conquests they celebrated.

At the conclusion of the second Punic war, Scipio Africanus, as noble a specimen of an ancient Roman as ever wore the toga, who, with his regal magnificence and courtly breeding quite staggered the simple minds and frugal maxims of his contemporaries, after driving Hannibal out of Italy, conquering the north of Africa, and bringing captive to Rome, Siphax the Numidian King, passed along the *Via Triumphalis*, "leading the most splendid triumph," says garrulous old Livy, "which had ever been beheld." But Livy should have moderated this expression, remembering the days of Paulus Æmilius, for more brilliant still was the sight when that great and upright general, returning after the conquest of Greece, led Perseus, King of Macedon, through Rome in chains. A right royal sight was this, occupying three entire days, during which the vanquished and the victors defiled along the *Via Triumphalis* and the *Via Sacra* to the Capitol. Scaffolds were erected in the Forum, and in every part of the city commanding a view of the solemnity, the whole people appeared dressed in white as a symbol of festivity, the temples were set open, garlands adorned the walls, the altars smoked with aromatic incense, and lictors bearing the fasces wreathed with victorious laurel, cleared the way.

First appeared paintings and statues, the spoils of

classic Greece, borne on two hundred and fifty chariots. Next were displayed the most beautiful Macedonian arms and armour, of furbished brass and polished steel, helmets, shields, breast-plates, greaves, Cretan targets, Thracian bucklers, quivers of arrows, naked swords, and long pikes, all thrown promiscuously together, which, as they passed clanking along the rough slabs of the often traversed way, woke the echoes with sounds so harsh and terrible, men could not hear them without dread and horror. After the glistening armour walked three thousand soldiers loaded with money, and seven hundred and fifty vessels filled with silver coin. Others bore jewelled bowls, goblets, and cups of silver, enriched with the finest bassi relievi. Then came a company of legionaries sounding brazen trumpets, "not such airs," says Plutarch, "as are used in a procession of solemn entry, but such as the Romans sound when they animate their troops to the charge." Behind the trumpets came droves of fat oxen from the Thessalian plains; their gilded horns garlanded with ribbons and flowers, fluttering gaily in the breeze, accompanied by boys carrying gold and silver vessels of sacrifice. But time fails me to particularise the rich spoil, the caps and crowns of Antigonus and Perseus, Kings of Macedon, jewelled with dazzling gems: and I must hurry on to speak of the great captive himself, the

successor of Alexander, dragged in triumph to Rome. A chariot came first bearing his armour and his diadem, at a short distance followed his captive children, yet of tender age, the little innocents stretching out their tiny hands in supplication to the assembled Quirites as they passed along. Unconscious in their babyhood of the heavy doom awaiting them, they were only terrified and astonished at the strange spectacle, and stared and wondered at those iron-featured men who gazed so earnestly upon them. Even the stern Romans were touched at the sight of those poor children, and many tears were shed in pity for their innocence and cruel fate. Following the children came their unhappy father, Perseus, clad in black robes, with downcast head, disordered hair, and weeping eyes. He was surrounded by a train of mourning friends, all prisoners like himself. But anon as this melancholy train disappeared, what a thrilling change came o'er the spirit of the scene, when the hero, the conqueror, Paulus Æmilius himself, radiant in glittering armour, appeared in his triumphal chariot, preceded by slaves bearing four hundred coronets of gold, offered by the vanquished Grecian cities. Paulus, at all times a remarkably handsome man and of a most noble presence, was set off by a purple robe interwoven with gold, and bore a branch of

laurel in his hand. A shout of delight, a roar of rapturous applause, shook the packed ranks, the very Capitol trembled, the seven hills rang to the joyful pæans that greeted the great warrior and his brave army, who followed their general's chariot, every soldier bearing, like him, a laurel branch, the badge of victory. Some sang joyous songs, others chaunted odes of victory, each celebrating the exploits of Æmilius, "a man revered and admired by all," says Plutarch, "and whom no man could envy."





THE MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS.



THE contrasts afforded by Rome have become historical. Grandeur and squalor, magnificence and dirt, past and present, sacred and profane, all jostle and struggle for supremacy in the dingy streets once pressed by the golden sandals of the emperors of the world. But amid all the eccentric contrasts afforded by this clashing of external aspects and moral associations, jumbled together as if for the nonce by the wicked hand of some presiding Nemesis, to read mankind a forcible lesson on the *sic transit gloria mundi* text,—nothing is so striking as the fact that, at this present moment, the Mausoleum of Augustus is used as a *circus*. The fate of that stately ruin, at once tomb, fortress, and stage, points a moral lesson more significant in eloquent suggestion, than all the sermons ever penned. Some one has symbolised the incongruous contrast, by likening it to a human skull used as a drinking cup; the comparison is not unapt. That tomb is a bitter satire

on humanity that would have rejoiced the heart of Voltaire; a *plaisanterie* ghastly enough to have made La Rochefoucauld smile.

The very name of Mausoleum has departed, and, to discover the place where Cæsar's ashes reposed, the stranger must ask for the Palazzo Corea, and to find it, dive into a network of narrow and filthy streets lying between the Corso and the Rippetta. At length an unpleasant alley, named, *Via dei Pontefici*, is gained, and one stands in front of a dismal looking palace, falling to pieces in a kind of dignified and aristocratic decay. Dirty stables, and dark little shops, a great *Portone* below, and many half-closed windows above, ornament the façade, on which no solitary sunbeam ever lingers. This gloomy Palazzo stands to the street, and you must pass through it to gain the irregular cortile behind, treading on what *seems* a dirty pavement, but which is, in fact, formed of beautiful marble slabs of that green speckled kind called Serpentino.

On one side of this *Portone*-passage is a little niche in the wall, not for statues, oh no; but for selling the tickets, the *biglietti*. This is the *Botteghino*, within which sits a grim-looking man with a long beard. All around others are crying out, "*Zigari, zigari scelti, vuole comprare, sono eccellenti, ecco zigari.*" How enraged the

manes of the deified Cæsars must be, if floating somewhere between earth and heaven, they hear these men screaming "Cigars to sell," on the threshold of their tomb !

Escaped from the cigar vendors, and the dense vapour raised by those who smoke them, the cortile beyond is reached. There can be no mistake about its being the right locality, for over the door of the inner building is a huge board, on which is written *Mausoleo di Augusto*. The segment of a circular building with projecting cornice is just visible in an angle of the cortile, rising above an immense substructure of reticulated tufa, browned and worn by ages. This fragment is a glimpse of the Mausoleum, as you learn afterwards, but at first it all looks like a shapeless mass, so deformed by additions and gloom and dirt, that it takes time to understand. The walls, old as well as new (meaning by new, something as recent as the Middle Ages), are festooned with ivy and trailing plants, giving a picturesque relief to the stern old pile. Idle groups of ill-looking *canaglia* always hang about this cortile when the performance is going on. A more ungracious, heavy-browed, malicious-eyed race than the *plebs urbana* now prowling about the Eternal City, can scarcely be conceived. There is an air of fallen grandeur, and conse-

quent sense of wrong, an indignant bearing, half beggar, half assassin, a scowl of defiance and of cruelty, quite peculiar to the Romans. They wear their rags like kings, but it is majesty fallen and starving, and kings are hungry like other men, and must steal too, and unsheath a stiletto now and then if begging will not fill their pockets.

There is a great gaping entrance, like the mouth of a cavern, and then come three dirty flights of steps, and on the walls marble tablets are fixed, which one naturally examines with curiosity, supposing them to be inscriptions having some connection with the ruin. Yes, they have a very close connection with the *present* ruin, and are much more legible than many tablets over which antiquarians have blinded themselves. One, in particular, informs the passer by "that the loquacious trumpet of Fame may cease sounding in any locality where the name of Giovanni Guillaume, the superb cavalier, and most extraordinary rider, so much applauded in the city of the Tiber, is not known." These inscriptions are nothing but *puffs* "graven on stone," in laudation of the laurels won in the circus above.

Arrived at the top of the dark stairs, where, if you do not take care, you will commit *felo-de-se* with as much unconcern as did the philosophic Thræsea, your check

is taken by another dirty personage with a beard, and you emerge on the *anfiteatro*, not large in size but shaped precisely like the Colosseum. Ascending rows of stone seats, gradually receding towards the top, entirely surround it. These tiers of seats are surmounted by a covered gallery, one half of which is divided into private boxes, while above is an open esplanade or promenade, guarded by an iron railing, to prevent accidents. Such is the present outward and visible aspect of the Mausoleum, where the *plebs* come rushing in by the "Vomitorium," thinking as little about the shades of Augustus, or Marcellus, or Drusus, or in fact anything classical, as the honest John Bulls who throw orange peel at Astley's. The *plebs* rush in and take their places on the lower range corresponding with the ancient *podium*, with marvellous unconcern, puffing those everlasting *zigari*, which they have bought at the door, (standing on the beautiful blocks of serpentino) and are quite delighted with the flimsy pageant around. What do they care if they are sitting in the place of the vestals who lounged on their curule chairs, cushioned with embroidered pillows, beside the pavilion of the Emperor, or in the seats of the "Conscript Fathers," with their snowy togas purple edged and ample, hanging about them in statuesque folds,—so that they are

amused? Party after party enter, and seat themselves in the places of the knights, the ambassadors, the tribunes, and the censors, all eagerly looking out for *Pagliaccio* or *Stentarello*, or betting on a favourite horse which comes bounding in, ridden by some fair nymph little encumbered by drapery. The music roars out joyous airs, the horses scud round and round the arena, *Pagliaccio* stands in the midst ready with his well-worn jokes, while above is the blue sky encanopying the scene. There is no envious *Velarium* to shut out the mildly radiant heavens, glistening with the last rays of departing day at the *Ave Maria* hour. Spite of the clanging of the brass band, the roars of *Bravo*, *Bravissimo*, *Via*, *Coraggio*, *Bis*, that salute some favourite equestrian, spite of the insufferable odour of cigars, one feels the spirit of the past stealing over one in certain undefinable visions, very incongruous indeed, in the present environments.

It is essentially a happy scene this *al fresco* theatre, and as such totally differs from its ancient prototype, the circus, where the smell of blood was so oppressive that every now and then the performance was stopped, while distilled perfumes were showered from above. There is no *Sandapila*, no gloomy *Spoliarium*; the worst misfortune that can happen is to be hissed off the stage,

and then the discomfited actor escapes by the *Sanavi-varium*.

The audience is in high good humour to-night, because *Signor Bucefalo* rides a favourite steed, and a wonderful pony sits down to a table with a white napkin fastened to his chin, and eats out of a plate. Clown then wipes his mouth, and gets kicked for his pains. Two brigands afterwards appear, who have robbed and murdered some fifty travellers in the *Abruzzi*, and hide their bag of gold in the sawdust, which the wise pony, who in the meantime has re-entered, finds and pulls out with his teeth!

You should have heard how the excited Italians screamed and roared *Bravo*, and clapped their hands, and how the band clashed out. *Bagattella!* it made the massive old walls shake again, and would have shaken the ashes of the imperial Cæsars too, were the Mausoleum other than "an empty urn, whose holy dust was scattered long ago." As to the cigar gentry on the esplanade, they drink *limonata*, and laugh, and stamp, and bellow till they are well-nigh choked. Before the performance is over night has set in, and the young stars come trembling out, but they are soon put to shame, for the arena is suddenly illuminated, and the glowing torches cast strange lights and shadows on the actors and the horses, leaving the spectators enveloped in absolute darkness.

It would take but little imagination to transform *Pagliaccio*, in his white tunic, into the shade of Augustus.

Well, it is all over, and the audience, who have been *doing* the classics without knowing it, pass down those dirty stairs and out into the street, treading on the mud-covered serpentino pavement over which such pompous processions have passed, and the place is left to solitude and the owls, or any imperial ghost not utterly scandalised at nineteenth-century clowns and the smell of cigars.

Strabo tells us that the Mausoleum consisted of a large tumulus of earth, raised on a lofty basement of white marble shaded by evergreens in the manner of a pendant garden, from the base to the summit, which terminated in a pinnacle, crowned with a bronze statue of Augustus. Beneath the tumulus was a central hall around which ran a range of fourteen sepulchral chambers. At the outer entrance stood two Egyptian obelisks, around lay a sacred grove, divided into walks and terraces. Opposite the Mausoleum was the *Ustrina*, or funeral pile, built also of white marble, surrounded by iron balustrades, and planted about with poplars.

Comprised within the vast enclosure of the Campus Martius, on which the modern city stands, the lofty tomb, with its three open galleries, looked most im-

posing, rising out of stately groves of ilex, bay, laurel, and cypress, dedicated to the manes of the Cæsars. From the entrance, flanked by two obelisks fifty feet in height, opened out broad walks and spacious avenues, which the Romans could enjoy : the enclosure being open to the citizens. Beyond, occupying the present site of the *Piazza del Popolo*, extended other funereal woods, where, in separate tombs, reposed the remains of the imperial clients and freedmen.

I have said that opposite the Mausoleum stood the *Ustrina*, where the imperial bodies were burnt. The corpse was enveloped in a preparation of asbestos, a material which is at once susceptible to fire, yet resists its action, so that the remains, though consumed on the funeral pyre and reduced to ashes, were yet securely enveloped in this winding sheet. When the body was consumed the asbestos was opened, and the ashes it contained placed in an urn, and deposited in the *loculi*. The precise situation of the *Ustrina* has been ascertained from some ruins answering to the description, incorporated in the foundations of the houses near the church of *San Carlo* in the *Corso* ; one particular block, or *isola* of buildings, in particular, being identified with the site from its curious name of "*Le case bruciate*," the burnt houses.

Drawing aside the veil of the past, let us call up some of the scenes connected with this Mausoleum.

Augustus, its founder, rules in Rome more absolutely than Julius Cæsar, though he is only styled perpetual dictator, or, as he calls himself, "a humble citizen to whom the care of the Commonwealth is confided." Divided between the intrigues of Livia and the ambition of Tiberius his adopted son, old age and infirmity have overtaken him, after a reign of unparalleled prosperity. Sole and absolute sovereign of the civilised universe, his reign formed a breathing time between the distraction of civil conflicts, and the deliberate and systematic tyranny of the emperors ; a moment when conquered nations acquiesced in the power of their conquerors, the barbarians were driven back to their native wilds, universal peace prevailed, and the Temple of Janus was closed.

It was summer, and Augustus, sailing leisurely from isle to isle, touched here and there on the delicious shores bordering the Gulf of Naples. He listened to the flatteries breathed around him, to the recitation of the poets, to the disputes of the philosophers ; now visiting one beautiful city, then another ; rapturously received everywhere, and diverted with games in the circus and the theatre. It was in the midst of this delightful progress that mortal illness overtakes him.

He struggles against the fatal malady for a time ; then he knows that he is to die. The stoical Emperor is unmoved. He laughs and talks, and plays at cards with his courtiers, as long as his rapidly increasing illness permits, inquires of those about him if his state excites much curiosity at Rome, asks for a mirror and a comb, trims his hair, and recommends to his attendants the propriety of raising his sunken cheeks after death by some artificial means. Then, as if conscious what an actor he had been throughout his career, he turns to his surrounding friends, and asks, "If he had played well the drama of life ? If so," continued he, "applaud me, and clap your hands with pleasure." As he grew worse the crowd was dismissed, and he was left alone with Livia ; "Farewell," said he, "never forget our union, Farewell." Soon after he expired in her arms.

All Rome flocked to the Palatine whither his body was removed, and where it lay in state for seven days on a raised bed, draped with purple and ornamented with ivory and gold. To say he lay in state is but a cruel fiction, the real corpse was hid at the foot of the bed, while in its place appeared a waxen figure, pale and emaciated, clothed in the triumphal habit. Beautiful slaves stood beside the pallid image, pretending, in ghastly mockery, to drive away the flies from the imperial face, and to guard

the slumbers of Augustus. Around the sumptuous couch sat the Senate in mourning habits, along with the most distinguished matrons. They wore neither gold nor jewels, but arrayed in white robes, mourned, or seemed to mourn, the great departed. Daily, during the seven days that the body lay in state, the physicians presented themselves as if visiting the deceased Emperor. Each day they repeated "He is worse." At last the hideous farce ceased, and Augustus was carried from the Palatine on the shoulders of forty of the Prætorian guard.

Preceding the funeral couch was borne a statue of Victory, a delicately conceived flattery invented by the Senate, inferring that the goddess herself belonged to the family of the Cæsars, and that victory was hereditary in their line. Side by side were two statues of Augustus, one of gold, placed on a scaffold destined to receive divine honours, the other of silver, borne on a triumphal chariot. There was no need of the warning slave now : it was plainly evident that deified Cæsar was mortal. Then came the ancestral busts of the Julian line, supposed, by a poetic flattery, to be descended from Venus through Iulus, the "fair-haired" son of Æneas, whom they claimed as the founder of their race. This long line of ancestors was displayed in effigy, all save Julius Cæsar, who, being a god, could not appear in company with

mortals. Busts, too, followed of all the illustrious Romans since Romulus, celebrated for their great wisdom or heroic valour. Among these images, pictures also appeared, on which were engraven the titles of all the laws promulgated by Augustus, and the names of the nations vanquished by his arms. Troops of youths and maidens sang hymns in his honour; the Senate, the knights, the Prætorian soldiery, and an immense throng of citizens closing the procession.

All were habited in mourning, and in compliment to the deceased each senator had exchanged the golden rings they usually wore for those of iron. Arrived at the Forum the procession paused, and two funeral orations were pronounced by Tiberius and Drusus. Here the senators, by their own desire, took possession of the couch and bore it on their shoulders towards the funeral pile. As the procession passed through the city, all who were able threw on it aromatic perfumes, sweet-smelling herbs, and frankincense, also military crowns and decorations for heroic actions in war. Arrived within the enclosure of the Mausoleum, the couch was placed on the second division of the temporary temple, on the *Ustrina*, within which it was to be burnt, the *Pontifex maximus* and the priests standing around. Tiberius and the imperial family then advanced to give the last kiss,

not to Augustus, but to the wax statue representing him. Afterwards they took their places on a tribune, and the torches, with which the funeral pile was to be fired, were presented to the centurions. At the moment that the vast catafalque caught fire and blazed up in whirlwinds of flame, an eagle was let fly from the upper division of the *Ustrina*, whose rapid flight towards heaven symbolised the apotheosis of the deified dead. Livia, and the principal senators habited in white tunics, remained for five days to watch the funeral pile, to collect the imperial ashes, and to place them in the Mausoleum.

Augustus was not the first occupant of the Mausoleum he had erected; the young Marcellus, his favourite nephew and intended successor, son of his sister Octavia, was the first of the Julian family laid within the marble pyramid, over whose summit waved the dark cypress and laurel trees. Of Marcellus little is known, and yet his short life was made the subject of excessive adulation.

Here, too, reposed his mother Octavia, the neglected wife of the voluptuous Antony, a woman of exemplary virtue, but whose household excellencies could ill cope with the surpassing beauty of that "rare Egyptian," Cleopatra. Agrippa, the husband of the first Julia, lay near; he who built the Pantheon, and paid so dearly for

the honour of calling himself son-in-law of Augustus, by being united to a wife of such undisguised profligacy, that her own father was forced to banish her. This was the Julia who was educated as an ancient Roman, who lived at home, learning to spin, *domi mansit, lanam fecit*, and whose every word and action were entered in a journal. Caius and Lucius, nephews of the Emperor, were placed near, and Livia, his well-beloved wife, with whom he had lived seven-and-thirty years in perfect love and harmony, afterwards rested beside him. At his death she was honoured by the Senate with the title of Augusta, and in fulsome adulation of his memory, the further appellation of "Mother of her country" was proposed. But her son Tiberius negatived both these motions, and Livia lived to feel, with bitterness, the neglect of a mean tyrant, who forgot that he owed both his adoption and succession to her unremitting interest on his behalf.

Germanicus, the noble-hearted warrior, the attached husband, the devoted father, the kind master, gentle and gracious to all, undebauched by pleasure, unspoilt by success, lay here, his funeral urn placed beside the ashes of his relentless enemy, Livia.

Tacitus relates that as the fleet conducting his faithful wife, Agrippina, bearing his funeral urn from Syria,—where he died from the effects of the poison administered

by Piso,—hove in sight of the Italian shore at Brundisium, the sea-coast, the walls of the city, the tops of the houses, and every spot that afforded even a distant view, were covered with spectators. When Agrippina appeared, bearing her husband's urn, and leading two of their children, men and women, relations and strangers, all joined in one loud burst of sorrow.

Agrippina, who suffered such grief for the loss of Germanicus, as well as every mortification and persecution the malice of Tiberius and Livia could invent, died in exile, but her ashes were permitted to lie in the Augustan Mausoleum beside those of her husband.

Beside the first Agrippina was placed the monumental urn of her daughter, the second Agrippina, the mother of Nero. No funeral pomp lights up the funeral groves in her honour; an execrable matricide had deprived her of her life. Britannicus, the son of Claudius, lay here, destroyed by poison in his fourteenth year by the same Nero his half-brother, who had stained his hands with a mother's blood.

Among the later Emperors, the funeral of Severus is particularly recorded. He was not buried in the Augustan tomb, but in the same temple where rested the ashes of Marcus Aurelius his predecessor. Herodian has left a vivid picture of the ceremonies observed on the occasion,

which, as the reader will observe, are almost identical with those that took place at the Mausoleum. Severus died in Britain, but his ashes were borne by his two sons, Geta and Caracalla, to Rome. The same heartless pageant was enacted that I have detailed in speaking of the death of Augustus. A figure of wax was prepared, resembling the Emperor, and displayed upon a regal couch, the Senate and the citizens, robed in white, standing around. At the end of seven days, this bed was carried into the Roman Forum beside the Sacred Way. Here, on a raised platform, stood a band of children, sons of senators, who, with harmonious voices, sang the lamentations of the dead. The bed was then borne through the Campus Martius to the Temple, where it was placed on a funeral pile resplendent with gold, ivory, statuary, and paintings. Aromatics, perfumes, ointments, spice, frankincense, fruit, and flowers were cast upon the corpse, and the Roman knights rode round the *Ustrina* in a sort of solemn tournament. They were followed by processions of chariots and triumphal cars driven by charioteers habited in purple, containing maskers, representing the illustrious generals and emperors whose deeds had added glory to the Roman name. The hereditary princes, Geta and Caracalla, then fired the funeral pile, and the accustomed

eagle flew from the summit. According to chronological order, I ought before to have mentioned, that Nerva was the last Emperor laid in the long home of the deified successors of Augustus. When his urn was deposited in the Mausoleum centuries had passed, death had been busy in the imperial house, and all the sepulchral cells were filled. The marble pyramid was then closed.

Then there comes a long, long pause ; centuries roll by, and the ivy, the wild vine, and the snowy clematis clasp the lonely Mausoleum in their wide-stretching arms ; the mighty fabric falls into gradual decay ; the surrounding groves, the tall cypresses, and the dark ilex woods grow old, their branches are scathed with the storms of ages, and the breezes from the yellow Tiber flowing through the fair meadow, once the Campus Martius, sigh sadly among the consecrated shades. Grass and moss gather on the stately terraces, the green banks sloping to the river no longer echo to the feet of a gay and reckless multitude ; let the passing festival be to celebrate the birth of Cæsar or his death, so that they may enjoy the games in the circus and the theatre. All is desolation and decay, the glory of the city has departed with the pompous pageants of her emperors, and deep mediæval shadows wrap the world in gloom.

In the fifth century the brutal soldiers of Alaric

burst like a volcano over the devoted city. Believing that treasure was interred within the Cæsars' monumental urns, they broke down the bronze gates, violated the tombs, and, disappointed in their search, flung the imperial ashes to the winds,—hungry lean Goths as they were !

The race of the Colonna, ever the foremost in the annals of national spoliation, turned the Mausoleum into a fortress, thus devoting all that remained to certain destruction.

Soon afterwards the Roman populace enraged at a repulse by the citizens of Tusculum (a mishap generally attributed to the treachery of the Colonna) ruthlessly destroyed all that remained of the marble Mausoleum. Nothing was left standing save some walls so hugely massive that they defied destruction. But the Colonna again gained possession of these fragments, and, protected by their strength actually stood a siege within them from Pope Gregory IX.

In the fourteenth century a great patriot arose, one who had dreamed of re-animating Rome ; who with primitive ideas would have brought back primitive laws, such as prevailed in the days of the Camilli and the Fabii, when the world was happy and Rome was wise. For an instant the splendid vision seemed realised ; all

Europe stood astonished, and prostrate Italy rejoiced over the birth of a new era. But a little space and the brilliant chimera fell with its creator, and still deeper shadows close around. Rienzi, the last of the Romans, died beside the marble lion at the Capitol. No word, no epitaph, records his murder. But mark the strange vicissitudes of fortune : his body, after having been ignominiously exposed in the streets for two days and two nights, was dragged by some Jews, at the command of his bitterest enemies, the Colonna, and burnt on the ruined walls of the Augustan monument. Happier in his death than in his life, the greatest enemies of Rienzi provide him a fitting sepulchre, and the ashes of Rome's last tribune repose on the same sacred soil where Cæsar and Augustus rested.





THE CÆLIAN HILL.



THE Cælian hill, but little frequented by strangers, abounds in monuments, and is rich in memories of both Pagan and Christian Rome. In early times the hill was called Querquetulanus, and was covered with a grove of oak trees. Tullus Hostilius first included this sylvan suburb within the city walls. After the destruction of Alba, "the long white city" beside the silvery lake, those citizens who were transported to Rome fixed their habitation here. But the name of Cælian was first given from Cælius Vibenna, an Etrurian chief, who, marching at the head of his countrymen to assist the Romans, had this hill assigned him as a residence. The number of his followers is said to have been so great that their houses extended down to the Forum. In the reign of Tiberius the buildings on the Cælian were destroyed by a fire. Tiberius, who had shortly before retired to Capri, with unusual liberality ordered a large distribution of money in proportion to the damage each individual had

sustained, and the servile Senate at once commanded that the hill should be henceforth called Mount Augustus; a command judiciously disregarded by the good sense of the commons. So the name of Cælian, and the memory of the Etruscan warrior was remembered, when the liberalities of Tiberius were forgotten.

Standing on the verdant piazza before the stately portal of the Church of San Gregorio, "within a bowshot where the Cæsars dwelt," a lonely lane extends up the hill to the left. It is a melancholy unfrequented path, far from the noise and bustle of the modern city, a spot where the past reigns supreme. How often have I ascended that narrow stony way closely hemmed in by ancient walls,—remains perhaps of Nero's Golden House and afterwards of the Baths of Titus,—supported by over-arching groins of solid masonry spanning the road, leading up to the desolate grass-grown piazza, encircled by vaulted ruins crumbling into dust, which extends before the Passionist Church, dedicated to SS. Giovanni e Paolo.

This venerable church, said to have been built by Pammachus the friend of St. Jerome, is visible from the Palatine and the Colosseum, its galleried *campanile* warmed into a ruddy tint by the sun of ages, rising out of the fair forest of greenery that belts the Flavian Amphitheatre, and clothes the valley dividing the Cælian

from the Palatine. The façade facing the piazza is provokingly modern; the columned portico and iron gates little assimilating with the surrounding prospect, where the eye rests on nothing but the tottering walls of what once were palaces, theatres, and temples, an impressive picture such as Rome alone can offer. Sadly the perfumed breezes of the coming spring sigh through the desolate loopholes and rents long centuries have cloven in these unintelligible masses, now wreathed with creeping plants and delicate flowering grasses like garlands on a corpse, making death hideous. Under the grottoes and caves hollowed out in the surrounding ruins, congregate a complete army of beggars, who, emboldened by the solitude, beset one with almost threatening importunity. "*Dammi qualche cosa per l'amor della Madonna.*" "*Per pietà, un povero cieco.*" "*Un Bajocco per me infelice, che ho perduto una gamba.*" "*Guarda, che mi muojo di fame.*" Such sounds arise from all sides as the wretched objects come huddling out of filthy holes and corners, the ruins of Rome's ancient grandeur still shrouding them, her suffering children, from the sun and from the rain. These beggars, with now and then a black-robed monk with pallid countenance and downcast eyes, wearing embroidered on his breast the crown of thorns and sacred monogram, who glides by the old walls like

a ghost doing penance, are the only living creatures I ever beheld in this place.

But the church door stands open, let us enter. Alas ! all is modernized ! Yet, such a peculiar sanctity reigns within, such an awful silence, that after a time the white-washed walls are forgotten, or serve but as an appropriate background on which the death-like monks pass to and fro with noiseless steps.

The organ peeled forth in strains of inspiring harmony, the monks knelt around the altar, bowed to the earth in speechless prayer, the voice of the priest sounded and again the organ rolled and thundered through the lofty aisles, then melted away in hollow tremulous murmurs and was heard no more. The vespers were over, and the pale sad monks, laden, as it seemed, with the burden of humanity, glided silently out. I now looked round for the tomb of the patron saints, and found it under the high altar, where a porphyry urn enshrines the bodies of these Christian heroes, who were buried where their palace stood on the brow of the Cælian hill, one of the most beautiful situations in Rome. Touching association : their home, their household hearth, become their sepulchre !

In the fourth century, SS. Paolo and Giovanni were officers in the army of Julian the Apostate, that callous

and hypocritical philosopher, who sought to immortalise his name by rebuilding the fallen temples and the desecrated shrines of Paganism. The brothers, who had previously been attached to the service of the daughter of Constantine the Great, were remarkable for their great charity and goodness. But when Julian ascended the throne, precisely those virtues which had hitherto made them loved and honoured roused his utmost indignation, and marked them out for special persecution. Among others of his household, they were commanded to sacrifice to idols. Ten days were given them for reflection. They refused. Soldiers of Christ, before becoming officers of Cæsar, the brothers, remembering the glorious example of the Theban legion, replied, "That their lives were at the disposal of the Emperor, but that their soul and their faith belonged to God." Despairing of overcoming their respectful but firm refusal, the nephew of Constantine caused them to be secretly slain in their own house. Such is the traditionary history, handed down by the early church, of the brethren in whose honour this church is erected. Passing from the high altar where their mutilated remains repose, along the rich pavement, the most perfect specimen of the opus Alexandrinum in Rome, I paused beside a tablet of white marble let into the floor, surrounded by an iron railing. An old beggar

knelt beside it, almost prostrate, repeating his *corona*, and, at the end of each *Ave*, bending forwards and kissing the stone.

On the spot marked by that marble slab the saints were massacred, a crime recorded by these simple words, "*Locus Martyrii Ss. Joannis et Pauli in aedibus propriis.*"

Hard by the church, where solemn thoughts come over the soul like falling leaves in autumn, a huge portal opens, leading into dark cavernous recesses of unfathomable depth forming the ancient Vivarium. Under these vaulted arches of Cyclopean masonry, the wild beasts were confined before being turned into the arena below in the Colosseum. A large cistern of water was provided to quench their thirst, and their food was thrown down from an aperture in the roof, still visible. Subterranean galleries, piercing the rocky sides of the hill, opened a passage into the *carceres* of the amphitheatre. Below, deep down in the chaotic gloom, an immense reservoir of water, it is said, existed—a Stygian lake, vast and profound, enshrouded in perpetual darkness, used, according to tradition, as one of the many reserves of water required for transforming the arena of the theatre into a Naumachia. Grottoes and vaulted apertures still open out in the walls of the dimly-seen enclosure, conducting into yet unexplored subterranean chambers

below, cut in the tufa rock—damp, dreary vaults, destined as the Spoliarium, or prison, of the gladiators. To recall the roaring of the savage beasts that once trod this soil, starved and tormented to make them still more ferocious as they rushed forth before the assembled thousands lining the amphitheatre, tier above tier, who, all thirsting for the blood of the Christians, madden them with wild yells and cries—to conjure up in fancy these lonesome dungeons, where sighed the resigned but suffering believer side by side with the gladiator, who vomits forth his foul life cursing gods and men—to think of all this, standing in this gloomy hall, under the trembling light of a flickering torch, made me shudder!

With the characteristic indifference of the modern Romans, the vaulted hall leading to these sombre recesses, where a subdued light descends through a circular aperture, is used as a barn, and filled with freshly-scented hay and great bundles of dried fuel, the provision of the monks for the coming winter.

The Temple commenced by Agrippina in honour of her husband Claudius, demolished by Nero as interfering with the sight of his Golden House, and reconstructed by Vespasian, one of the richest and grandest monuments of ancient Rome, is believed to have stood within the space occupied by the garden of the monastery.

Again in the narrow road, I gradually ascend the hill, still bordered on either hand by high walls, to where a massive arch of travertine terminates the vista. Ruined towers and turrets crown this sombre monument, and ivy, and low plants, and stunted shrubs protrude through the parting stones. The aspect of the whole region is almost fearful in its desolation; no soft features of Italian scenery—no luxuriant nature—is here, to mantle the gaping ruins of the past. Walls, fragments, and heaps of stones “grovel on earth in indistinct decay.” Through the breaks in the walls the Neronian aqueducts are visible, huge skeletons, traversing the plain like the funeral procession of Rome’s departed glories. In the midst of this wreck of fallen grandeur, the old arch stands entire, symbolic, in its stern simplicity, of the unalterable severity of republican Rome. Not a tree, not a shrub, not even a cypress, breaks the hard, bare lines, or softens down this marble wilderness.

This is the arch of Dolabella who was joint-consul with Silanus, A.D. 10; and it marks the entrance of the *Campus Martialis*, where public games in honour of Mars were celebrated, when the Campus Martius was inundated by the Tiber. Nero afterwards connected it with his line of aqueducts. At this point the hill was anciently divided into the great and little Cælian

(Cœliolus). Further on lay the school of gladiators, known under the name of *ludus matutinus*, where men were instructed in the act of slaying each other scientifically, something after the fashion of modern boxers. The *Macellum Magnum* was situated in this direction, as well as the camp of the five cohorts (appointed by Augustus to watch over the city during the night, and lend assistance in case of fire or accidents), also the palace of Lateranus, and other monuments, of which only the names remain.

Beyond the arch a barren-looking green piazza, uneven and broken by shapeless ruins, appears. Opposite stands the Church of San Stefano Rotondo, which we will enter anon, presenting externally the aspect of a theatre from its elevated dome and circular shape. The same sad scene is around—ruins, churches, walls, “the gaps of centuries;” not a human being is visible, not even the sound of a *cicala* breaks the oppressive silence. It is only in such scenes as these one can fully realize the solemn desolation of the fallen city,

“Childless and crownless in her voiceless woe.”

Yet recollections and memories dear to Christian Rome gather around this desolate waste. Here dwelt the rich matron Cyriaca, whose name is connected with the

death of San Lorenzo, who on the eve of his martyrdom gathered together the sick, the poor, the naked, the hungry, beside the dwelling of Cyriaca, and ministered to them there. San Filippo Neri, the founder of the Oratorians, justly styled the Apostle of Rome, often conducted his young disciples and penitents to this verdant piazza, himself joining, with genuine Italian vivacity, in their boyish sports. There is something most affecting in the mixture of ardent love, vivid faith, and Christian simplicity, displayed throughout the life of this eminent philanthropist.

Passing across the rugged piazza the mind strangely pendulates between Christian and Pagan times. To the right, the eye rests on a small sculptured marble trireme or bark, called the *Navicella*, supposed to have been an ex voto offering to ensure a happy return, from some "Ancient Mariner" to Jupiter Redux, whose temple stood near this portion of the Cælian Hill. Behind this pagan relic stands the church to which it has given its name, *Santa Maria della Navicella*, a striking incongruity in nomenclature truly; but in Rome one soon becomes accustomed to the harmonious adaptation of profane and Christian symbols. This church, said to be built on the site of the house of Saint Cyriaca, being closed, I could not enter. It is one of the oldest in Rome, and

contains many fine frescoes by Giulio Romano and Pierino della Vaga, as well as some precious mosaics of the ninth century.

Beside the mouldering church, a large iron gate leads into a beautiful *plaisance*, a perfect paradise of life and colour. Finding the gate open I entered. The air was fragrant with the odour of fresh flowers, and gentle breezes came sighing through the classic groves. How beautiful and yet how melancholy ! Ever the same image, nature wreathing the dead. At the extremity of a broad walk, a handsome modern villa stands on the brow of the hill, surrounded by balustraded terraces. It belongs to Prince Adalbert of Prussia. Around stretches a luxuriant garden ; purple violets fringe the borders, turning their perfumed bosoms to the sun. Further on is a berceau-walk of venerable ilex trees, their knotted branches closing over head and forming an impenetrable shade. At the extremity a spacious terrace commands a splendid view. Immediately below lies the Vegria Casale, where, in ancient times, stood the palace of the Symachii, that distinguished family whose powerful interest was invariably employed in an obstinate opposition to Christianity. Among the green recesses of the clustering vine-walks many interesting inscriptions still remain, as well as several curious mosaics. Beyond,

embosomed in fragrant groves, the Baths of Caracalla stand forth crowning a gentle eminence in their vast length and breadth; cyclopean masses, connected by yawning arches, lofty gateways, and crumbling walls; haunted by bloody memories of the murdered Geta; where every stone seems to become articulate, calling out in hollow murmurs those terrible words, "*Bibe fratrem*," which even in moments of wildest debauchery, echoed in Caracalla's ears, making the imperial fratricide turn pale and tremble.

Bordering these lofty ruins lies a broad undulating valley, backed by the Aventine, now laid out in vineyards and gardens, and broken into knolls and braes. In early days, before the erection of the Baths of Caracalla, the *Piscina publica*, an artificial lake devoted to the amusement of the Roman youth, occupied this hollow. Beside the lake extended an enormous palace or portico four thousand feet long, lined with the rarest marbles and decorated with statues and paintings, the floors paved with precious mosaics, and the roof painted in brilliant frescoes. This hall formed the central apartment, from which opened out, right and left, sixteen hundred chambers, each furnished with a bath and marble chair.

The pile of Titanic confusion, on which I gaze from the Terrace of the Villa Mattei, is girt by the level line

of the desolate Campagna, that earthen sea whose waving lines stretch away towards the west to meet the blue Mediterranean. Purpling under the radiant colouring of a bright spring day lay the Campagna beyond, on which the chequered sunlight played in broad masses of light and shade.

But to return to my pilgrimage on the Cælian Hill. Leaving the fair garden, I crossed the green piazza in the direction of San Giovanni Laterano, and visited the site of what was once the *Castra Peregrina*, the lodging of the foreign troops quartered in ancient Rome. Many inscriptions have enabled antiquarians to identify the spot; one preserved in the Museum of the *Collegio Romano* runs as follows :

Cocceivs Patrvins Princ Peregri Norvm.

Another is addressed, "To the tutelary Genius of the foreign camp; Alexander Analiclarivs Ædile, has with gratitude and joy accomplished a vow, made in a far distant country."

Here, in imperial times, the Romans housed those barbarians, whose succour became needful to the preservation of the overgrown Empire, when the valour of the once dauntless legions had gradually declined. Among these troops was the German cavalry, forming the im-

perial guard as early as the reign of Augustus. Afterwards came the German soldiery, the janissaries of Caligula; then the Illyrian troops enrolled in the army of Galba who were quartered in Rome at the very time when their patron was killed in the Forum; the Armenian body guards of Constantine, and others. Here also expired the German king Conodarius (made prisoner by Julian the Apostate), the last defender of his national liberty.

Leaving these interesting remnants of old Rome, I turned to the left and entered a low door, almost buried in a mouldering wall, leading into a damp grass-grown court, from whence I passed under a ruined gateway through divers damp passages and galleries, into the portal of a church, where a miserable *sacristano* was prowling about, like a human dog searching for bones, so keen and searching were his looks. He trembled with fever and did not speak, but curiously followed me with his eyes as I passed into the church. It is circular in shape and exquisitely proportioned, with a perfect forest of light elegant pillars of the Ionic order elevating and supporting a lofty dome in the centre. Within the inner circle stands the high altar almost hidden by sixty columns which surround it. The exterior pillars form the aisle out of which several small chapels open. It is

altogether as striking and singular a specimen of classical architecture as any extant, the precise features of the Pagan temple being retained, though skilfully accommodated to the exigencies of Christian worship. Antiquarians disagree as to its previous destination ; some say it was a temple dedicated to Bacchus, others to Jupiter, while again it has been doubted whether it were a temple at all, and not an arsenal, or a public bath.

Perhaps no church in all Rome is more awfully devotional than this once Pagan temple, its walls being especially dedicated to a display of the physical sufferings of the early martyrs represented in a series of large frescoes, executed by the skilful hands of Tempesta and Pomerancio.

Other shrines contain separate pages, bits and scraps as it were, of this agonising tale, full of such infinite significance ; but here, in this singular edifice, engraven on Pagan walls, under this lofty dome where sacrifice and incense burned in honour of Pagan gods, is displayed the whole chronicle of martyrdom. Elsewhere, episodes, passages, fierce tilts and duels of the great fight appear, here the entire panorama of the battle-field of ages is unveiled before our eyes, a wondrous and a humbling sight to the pride and insolence of man.

Here is St. Cecilia, the muse of Christian poetry,

“severe in youthful beauty,” the pure wife, the dignified Roman matron, for whom the bright roses were plucked in the heavenly garden, expiring in a scalding bath, the remains of which bath are still distinctly visible within her church in the Trastevere. St. Agnes, the innocent child-like girl, inspired with divine courage to refuse sacrifice to the Pagan gods ; here she is pictured sinking under the sword of the executioner—a being to her neither dreadful nor alarming, but rather the welcome messenger who summons her to glory.

By her side stands St. Lucia, her name sweetly symbolical of heavenly light, the fair Sicilian saint whose bones rest within the great silver shrine in her noble church at Syracuse ; she bears her eyes in a dish, their loss being the martyrdom by which she glorified God. Near her appears St. Agatha, the courageous maid of Catania, who, rather than wed the wicked Pagan governor Quintianus, was bound and beaten by his accursed slaves, who also by his command tore and rent her tender bosom.—“O thou tyrant !” exclaimed she, “shamest thou not to treat me so, thou who hast been nourished and fed from the breast of a mother ?” St. John is represented as he suffered, according to immemorial tradition, at Rome during the persecution under Domitian, being cast into a boiling cauldron of oil beside the Latin gate, where a

small shrine marks the spot; and the proto-martyr Stephen, who, under the crushing stones that rained upon his head, lifted up his eyes in an extatic vision, beholding, while yet on earth, the effulgence of the opening heavens. Ignatius, too, is here, the brave Bishop of Antioch, the disciple of the famous Polycarp, who, coming from the East, was torn by lions in the games of the Flavian amphitheatre: those hungry beasts that left but a bundle of his whitened bones. And Dorothea, with her soft musical name, the Cappadocian virgin, whose sweet face painters love to pourtray; her long hair hangs in wavy tresses, a crown of flowers rests on her fair young brow, and, as she suffers decapitation, an angel stands beside to comfort and console her. Martina too, the Roman martyr, who suffered by the lictor's axe, and whose bones rest in a costly shrine within her church in the Forum; and St. Andrew, on his forked cross; and St. Peter, bearing the sacred keys, who, in his extreme humility, suffered crucifixion on the Janiculum, his venerable head turned downwards; and brave St. Catherine, the Christian Pallas, "wise enough to talk of stars and firmaments;" and St. George, the legendary saint of our own land, on his high prancing steed, spurning the horrible Chimæra; and the maid Margaret, "who upon the dragon trode," are here. A picturesque saint is

the maid Margaret, as we image her painted by Guercino, "blithe in her heart and merry in her mood ;" and many more pictured on these mysterious, these tremendous walls !

Those beautifully pleading lines of Wordsworth, so apposite to this church, occurred to me:—

Ah ! if the old idolatry be spurned,
Let not your radiant shapes desert the land ;
Her *adoration* was not your demand.
The fond heart proffered it, the servile heart,—
And therefore are ye summoned to depart.
Michael, and thou St. George, whose flaming brand
The Dragon quelled, and valiant Margaret,—
Whose rival sword a like opponent slew ;
And rapt Cecilia, seraph-haunted Queen
Of harmony, and weeping Magdalene,
Who in the penitential desert met
Gales sweet as those that over Eden blew !





SAN GREGORIO.



ON opposite extremities of the Cælian Hill stand two celebrated churches, one, vying with the great Basilica of St. Peter's in antiquity, grandeur, and sanctity, the other, situated in a lonely corner, sheltered by waving groves and overshadowed by frowning ruins, dedicated to San Gregorio. It is of this latter I propose to speak. This church, elevated on a platform reached by a noble flight of steps, stands somewhat back from the road leading from the arch of Constantine to the Appian Way. Before it, extends a grassy parterre, half wild, half-cultivated, bounded on either hand by trees. Close by, to the left, a large portal opens into some public gardens, or rather, more correctly speaking, an Academic grove, a peaceful spot, lonely and suggestive, the grassy slopes broken by clumps and avenues of tufted trees, around whose roots the earliest spring flowers blossom, and traversed by broad walks and terraces leading towards the Cælian Hill. High above

the clustering thickets, tower the Colosseum, the arch of Constantine, the Palatine, and the distant Forum, forming classic vistas through the over-arching trees.

But to return to the quiet church throned on its marble steps. A spacious pillared portico opens into a cloistered area or cortile, ever a characteristic and peculiar feature of early Roman sanctuaries which from palaces have been converted into churches; the same arrangement being observable at *Santa Cecilia*, *Santa Sabina*, and *Santi Alessio* on the Aventine. We learn from Tacitus that this architectural arrangement was expressly commanded by Nero, in the new buildings erected after the conflagration of Rome which occurred during his reign. A new plan was adopted, the elevation of the houses was defined with an open area before the doors, and porticoes to adorn and secure the front. "Every house was to stand detached and isolated;" regulations which added considerably to the embellishment of the city, and which, it is curious to observe, have been to a certain extent perpetuated even to the present day among the Roman nobles. The site is historical, for in classic days the house of Mamurra, *præfectus fabrorum* of Julius Cæsar in Gaul, stood here. Pliny celebrates the splendour of this mansion on the Cælian Hill, and tells us that Mamurra was the first

Roman who lined his abode with marble. "Not a column," says he, "in the numberless porticoes, but was carved in the marble of Carystos or Luna."

Afterwards, on the same spot, stood the paternal mansion of Saint Gregory, the best, the meekest, the most illustrious pontiff that ever sat in the chair of St. Peter; whose noble life and extraordinary virtues have gained for him canonization in his own Church, and the surname of "*Great*" in the pages of universal history. This "servant of the servants of God," as, in his touching humility, he loved to be called, though born of illustrious parents and nursed in classic luxury, always detested the pride of the world. "From his infancy he loved and esteemed only heavenly things; and it was his chief delight to converse with holy monks, or to be retired in his closet, or in the church at his devotions." In this retirement he applied himself with such rigour to fasting and the study of the sacred writings, that he entirely ruined his health.

Gregory might say, with St. Paul, "in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, besides those things which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." Reduced, on one occasion, by his regal charities, to excessive poverty, this common father of Christendom, himself

tells us "he possessed but one horse, and five donkeys." At another time, a beggar being found dead in the streets of Rome, he actually excommunicated himself and abstained for days from communion, shutting himself up within his own cell, to make atonement by tears and penance for his supposed omission in allowing such neglect under his government. His life is a very romance of piety; by his fasts and personal austerities he sacrificed his health; by his writings he enlightened the church; and by an unwearied course of holiness, industry, and zeal, he not only marked his career as a beacon of spiritual light, amid the gloom of the Middle Ages, but has exercised a powerful influence over the universal Church in all times.

Let us, before entering his church, standing within the pillared cortile, as it were between the present and the past, "in front, the Palatine, Pagan Rome in dust; behind, the little cell a few feet square, where slept in sackcloth the man who gave the last blow to the power of the Cæsars," recapitulate some of the principal events of his varied life.

Gregory was the son of Gordianus, a Roman senator of wealth and influence, a member of the Anician family descended from Pope Felix II. Gordianus, with his wife Sylvia, dwelt in a sumptuous house on the Cælian

Hill; but noble and powerful as they were, the pleasures of the world offered no temptations to this pious pair. Gordianus, after the birth of Gregory, took orders and became one of the Regionarians, or cardinal deacons, ruling over ecclesiastical Rome; while Sylvia, who, in the life of St. Gregory, takes almost as prominent a part as Monica in that of St. Augustine, dedicated herself also to God in a life of solitude, inhabiting a little oratory outside the gates, near the Church of *St. Paolo fuori le mura*. No wonder that the saint while yet but a child, reared by such parents, showed preternatural dispositions to holiness, especially as a careful and studious education had stored his mind with various knowledge. Applying himself especially to the study of grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, civil law, and the canons of the Church, he commenced life as a lawyer. Afterwards, for twelve years, he exercised the functions of chief magistrate or prætor, a situation that obliged him to assume a pomp and state little differing from that of a consul.

At the death of Gordianus, Gregory, possessed of the patrimonial estate, literally obeying our Lord's command, devoted all his wealth to charitable purposes, converted his sumptuous mansion on the Cælian into a monastery and hospital, dedicated to St. Andrew, erecting, at the

same time, six similar establishments on his estates in Sicily. Within the walls of this church, in the year 375, he took the monastic habit of the Benedictine order, devoting himself entirely to contemplation and the study of sacred scriptures, as a preparation for the life which he hoped to lead. The little cell, still preserved within his chapel, was the place of his retreat.

At this period of his life we find him bitterly complaining of his inability to observe the canonical fasts from a weakness he had contracted, in consequence of his excessive austerities. It was now his notice was first attracted by the beauty of certain fair-complexioned Anglian youths, whom he saw exposed for sale in the slave market [of the neighbouring Forum. His active benevolence was awakened by hearing that they, as well as many of their nation, were Pagans. For the Christian religion, though generally diffused over Britain during the reign of Constantine, by the Roman legions that garrisoned that country after Paganism had been formally abolished by law and Christianity proclaimed the religion of the state, had, on the withdrawal of these foreign troops and the dis severment of all ties with the Empire, fallen into neglect and become comparatively forgotten. A small remnant of the Christian Church indeed took refuge in a few monasteries in the northern

and western portion of this island; but the mass of the nation, under the rule of their Saxon conquerors, lapsed into absolute idolatry.

Informed of these circumstances, Gregory, fired with holy zeal, determined to quit Rome, and go as a missionary into Britain to preach the gospel to the Angles. "For," said he, "it was a lamentable consideration, that the prince of darkness should be master of so much beauty as these comely Angles possessed, and that so fine an outside should have nothing of God's grace to furnish it within. Hallelujah and the praise of God must be sung in those parts." Possessed with this idea, he immediately applied to Benedict I., then Pope, for permission to depart, and having obtained it set forth privately, in company with several monks of his monastery. When his departure became known, the whole city was in an uproar; the people ran out in a body to the Pope who was proceeding to St. Peter's, crying out,—“Holy Father, what have you done? In suffering Gregory to depart, you have destroyed Rome, undone us, and offended St. Peter.” Benedict, either alarmed at the threatening aspect of the mob or touched by their entreaties, forthwith despatched messengers to recall him. Meanwhile, Gregory, foreseeing probable opposition to his departure, had pushed on to a considerable

distance from Rome. Nothing could exceed his reluctance to turn back, his whole soul was set on teaching the "Angli to sing Hallelujahs to the praise of their Creator."

On his return to Rome, Benedict named him one of the seven deacons whose duty it is to assist and advise the Pontiff. Pelagius II., who succeeded Benedict in the papal chair, sent Gregory as nuncio to Constantinople to solicit succours against the Lombards from the Eastern Emperor Tiberius, who received him with the highest distinction. "But," says Butler, "his public employments did not make him lay aside the practices of a monastic life, and at this very period of active political occupation he found time to compose his thirty-five books on Job, and to keep up an immense correspondence, extending over all parts of Christendom."

Gregory returned with delight and gratitude to Rome, too happy to have escaped from the toils and vexations of his diplomatic mission. He buried himself in his favourite cell, luxuriating in monastic solitude and tranquillity, as in a secure harbour. "For," writes he to Leander, "I see how difficult a thing it is to converse with the world without contracting inordinate attachments." But he was not long destined to enjoy this holy

calm. Pelagius dying at the beginning of the great pestilence in 590, the clergy, Senate, and people, unanimously named Gregory as his successor, an honour that he himself opposed by every means in his power. As it was then customary to refer the choice of a new pope to the Emperor, Gregory wrote urgent private letters both to the Emperor Maurice and the Patriarch of Constantinople, imploring them, as an act of friendship, to annul his election. But his private courier, outstripped by one despatched by Germanus, Prefect of Rome, had his letters seized and others substituted, praying for his election. Maurice, delighted at being able to confer so signal a boon on the universal Church, named Gregory Pontiff. When the appointment was made public, Gregory, overwhelmed with grief at finding all his efforts to avoid the proffered honour had been ineffectual, determined to fly from Rome and hide himself in some impenetrable solitude. He is actually said to have escaped by being let down from the walls in a wicker basket and for many days to have concealed himself in an undiscoverable cave enveloped in deep woods. During his absence, the people of Rome humbled themselves with fasting and prayer, while those who went in search of him are said to have been directed to the place of his concealment by a celestial light; while another tradition relates

that a dove flew before them, conducting their steps to the place where he was hid. He was brought back in triumph to the city, the tiara was forced upon him, and, to his sorrow, Gregory found himself obliged to renounce the narrow cell and leafy solitudes of the Cælian Hill for the pomp and splendour of the imperial palace on the Lateran. His letters eloquently express his feelings. "I remember with tears," writes he, "that I have lost the calm harbour of my repose, and with many a sigh I look on the firm land which I cannot reach. If you love me, assist me with your prayers. I am so overcome with grief that I am scarce able to speak. All that the world thinks agreeable brings me trouble and affliction, for I have lost the comfort of my calm, and appearing to be outwardly exalted, I am inwardly really fallen."

At this time a melancholy cloud hung over the Eternal City, a terrible pestilence raged, and Gregory's tender soul was agonised by the sufferings he beheld around him. After preaching a pathetic sermon, he appointed a procession or solemn Litany from the Church of the Ara Coeli (some authors say Santa Maria Maggiore) to St. Peter's. He himself walked first, and so fearful was the malady, that during the space of the single hour that the procession lasted eight persons are said to have died. On passing over the Tiber by the Ælian bridge, opposite

the mole of Hadrian, celestial voices were suddenly heard, according to ecclesiastical records, floating in the air, singing in celestial hymns these words, "*Regina Cœli lætare alleluja.*" Gregory, looking up with astonishment, hailed the heavenly messengers of good will with joy, and replied, joined by the entire multitude around—"Ora pro nobis Deum Alleluja!" At the moment that the response of the afflicted Romans rose in the air, an angel refulgent with glory was seen to sheath a fiery sword, and the plague mitigated from that hour. The statue of bronze representing San Michael, the angel of death, placed on the summit of the mole of Hadrian, is an historical record of this event. It is to this circumstance that the building owes its name of Castel Sant' Angelo. The words "*Regina Cœli*" were at the same time, and in commemoration of the same event, engraven on the ceiling immediately over the altar in the Church of the Ara Cœli on the Capitol, where they still remain in memory of the heavenly choristers that saluted the holy Pope.

Gregory, now installed in the chair of St. Peter, was literally what he transcribes himself, "the servant of the servants of God." Words cannot paint his beautiful humility, his zeal, his devotion, his industry, his love. Remembering the divine command, "Forasmuch as ye

have done it to the least of these little ones, ye have done it unto me," his exceeding charity towards all men, sinners as well as saints, believers and heretics, was unrivalled. He considered preaching as an indispensable part of his apostolic mission and has lent many a heart-stirring memory to the mouldering walls of the lonely martyr churches that skirt the walls of Rome, as the scenes where several of his famous homilies were delivered. Two of these homilies were pronounced in the Church of Santa Maria in Via Lata, where during two years the Apostle Paul lived chained to a Roman centurion ; another, the twenty-eighth homily, was read from the episcopal chair in the now desolate Church of San Nereo and Achilleo ; another I believe at San Clemente. Two he delivered in the Church of SS. Apostoli, and two in the ancient Church of Sant' Agnese fuori Porta Pia.

Of his boundless almsgiving, and the penury to which it reduced him, I have already spoken. But it was not alone the charity of works that distinguished him, it was that nobler mental quality, "that thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, believeth all things." To the Bishop of Naples he wrote, commanding him to receive and reconcile readily all who desired it, taking on his own soul the danger, "lest any should be answerable for their perdition, if they should perish by too great severity." He

considered himself as the common shepherd, to whom each individual sheep of the Christian flock was entrusted. The very Jews, those outcasts and pariahs of the Middle Ages, felt his all-embracing benevolence. Hearing that they had been deprived of their synagogue, he wrote to Peter Bishop of Terracina, commanding him to restore it. "For," said he, "they are not to be compelled, but converted by meekness and charity."

Although by general consent looked up to, and advised with, as the common father of Christendom, his humility was unalterable. When he heard that his writings on Job had been read aloud in the Church of Ravenna, he was afflicted and confounded. "I am ready," says he, "to be corrected by all persons ; on him I look as a friend by whose tongue I learn to wash away the stains of my mind." What he accomplished, wrote, and superintended, for the glory of God and the advancement of Christianity during the thirteen years he presided over the Church, is almost miraculous, when his wretched health is considered.

He has been reproached for his friendly correspondence with the Emperor Phocas, the barbarous murderer of Maurice and his entire family ; his correspondence with Brunehild, the Gaulish Jezebel of her age, has been also severely stigmatized by infidel writers.

Bayle especially has broken many a lance in attacking a man, whose virtues he was utterly unable to appreciate ; but it is not my province to enter into the political motives or historical details of his reign, in this rapid sketch, simply intended to give a local and living interest to his sanctuary, by calling up the remembrance of his good deeds among the walls once hallowed by his presence.

As a missionary, the zeal and success of his endeavours are historical. We English specially owe him a mighty debt of gratitude, as having been the means, under God, of restoring the light of Christianity to our benighted land. As a reformer, his institution of celibacy, generally but erroneously ascribed to Gregory VII., was one of the boldest strokes of ecclesiastical power ever executed. He also reformed the services of the Church, defined the Roman Liturgy as it has since remained, regulated the sacerdotal garments, arranged the music of the choir and himself trained the choristers. "Experience," says Gibbon, "had shown him the efficacy of these solemn and pompous rites, to soothe the distress, to confirm the faith, to mitigate the fierceness, and to dispel the dark enthusiasm of the vulgar."

The belief in pious tales and legends has been urged against him. Even the greatest characters must, to some

extent, partake of the characteristic weaknesses of the age in which they live, and as it has been well observed by a Protestant writer, "if at a period when credulity and ignorance were universal, he showed himself in some instances credulous and ignorant, it seems hardly a reproach to one, in other respects so good and great." That Gregory first preached a belief in purgatory, as an article of faith, I can scarcely admit; the accusation comes from his opponents, and is therefore not to be admitted without suspicion.

Let us now undraw the crimson curtains shading the door of his church, and enter. A chilling feeling of disappointment comes over one, on finding that the church, as well as the cortile, are modern, rebuilt in 1734 from the designs of Francesco Ferrari. What evil spirit possessed the prelates of the eighteenth century to mar and destroy every vestige of the sacred past? It is a wonder the very catacombs escaped! The interior is handsome and well proportioned, the nave supported by fine columns; but the painting, and gilding, and white-wash are so fresh, I could have fancied fifty years had not elapsed since the walls arose, a delusion not a little increased by the modern Italian style, that florid unmeaning architecture of which the eye becomes so weary after a lengthened residence in Italy.

To the right of the grand altar is a chapel gay with painting and gilding, dedicated to the saint, the altar adorned with carvings by Signorelli, representing events from his life.

In a small niche, entered by a low door, is the identical cell, where, in prayer, fasting, contemplation, and penance, he passed so many years; the aperture occupied by his bed is there, and the very marble chair on which he sat. As I gazed "with silent worship of the great of old," I could almost fancy I beheld the tall, dark-complexioned man, worn down by pains and premature infirmities, sitting in the darkened room, contemplating, in extatic gaze, the glories of a future state! In the Salviati Chapel on the opposite side of the high altar, is a fine portrait of Gregory by Annibal Caracci, arrayed in the pontifical habit, kneeling on a cushion, with his hand outspread, while a dove descends from above. Here, too, is a miraculous picture of the Virgin, much silvered and decorated, said to have spoken to Gregory while he prayed. It is a pale inexpressive painting of the early Siennese or Florentine school. I looked at the well-closed mouth indicated by stiff hard lines, and wondered.

The present edifice is not the ancient church dedicated to St. Andrew, built as I said on the site of Gregory's

house. This is an antiquated, tumble-down building, forming a wing of the present church, at the end of a lonely garden planted with box and wild roses that trail over the long grass, whither I was conducted by an intelligent young monk, looking very like a ghost in his white drapery, the distinctive costume of the Camaldolesi founded by St. Romuald, of the order of St. Benedict. In this ancient church, battered by time and weather, is to be found some compensation for the modernising spirit that so much shocks one's feelings in the larger edifice.

It contains three separate chapels, entered by different doors, which the monk duly unlocked, coarse oak doors without ornament or embellishment. In the first chapel, dedicated to St. Barbara, the armed Pallas or Bellona of mythology according to Mrs. Jamieson reproduced under a Christian aspect, is a fine statue by Niccoló Cordilieri, a pupil of Michael Angelo, of Sylvia the mother of Gregory, who, in majestic bearing and devotional grandeur, might be deemed a Madonna enthroned. Above is a feeble fresco by Guido, representing the Almighty hovering over a seraphic choir of angels, arranged round a balustrade adorned with drapery. I confess I cannot share in Kügler's admiration of this fresco as a work of art, nor can I endure to

behold that form "which eye hath not seen, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive," thus irreverently trifled with.

In the second chapel, dedicated to St. Andrew, the real and visible scene of Gregory's early devotions, are the two famous frescoes painted in emulation of each other by Guido and Domenichino. The chapel looks like a barn, moss-grown and musty, a strange *locale* in Imperial Rome, wherein to find the two finest works of the two greatest geniuses the Eclectic school ever produced.

In the last of the three chapels occupying this interesting portico, is a relic peculiarly characteristic of the excellent Gregory, being the identical marble table on which he daily fed twelve beggars. According to the legend, a particular beggar again and again presented himself at the gate of the convent, asking alms. Gregory, overflowing with charity, relieved his wants until he had nothing more to give, save only the silver porringer in which his mother Sylvia, from her monastic retreat sent him a little broth. This porringer he also gave the beggar. After he became Pope, it was his custom to entertain twelve poor men every evening at his own table, in pious remembrance of our Lord's sacramental supper. St. Paul says: "Be not forgetful to receive strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels

unawares;" so it fell out with St. Gregory, for one evening, whilst sitting at meat, he beheld not twelve, but thirteen guests, and the form of the stranger was as an angel of heaven, clad in robes of celestial glory. Then the Pope knew that he, like Abraham, had entertained an angel. This is one version of the legend, as represented in a very indifferent fresco on the walls of the chapel.

Another account describes the thirteenth or unbidden guest as appearing habited like the rest, as a pilgrim. Gregory surprised, called to his steward, and said, "Did I not command thee to invite twelve, and behold there are thirteen guests." Then the steward told them over and said, "Holy Father, there are surely twelve guests only." And Gregory held his peace; but after the meal, he called forth the unbidden guest, and asked him, "Who art thou?" And he replied, "I am the poor man thou didst formerly relieve, my name is Wonderful, and through me thou shalt obtain whatever thou shalt ask of God."

On the altar in this chapel stands a fine statue of Gregory, his hand lifted in benediction, said to have been commenced by Michael Angelo and finished by one of his scholars.

Impressed with all I had seen within, as I turned to

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leave the church I paused on passing the portico, struck by the grand view of the Palace of the Cæsars and the Palatine opposite. From no point do these mysterious remains appear better defined or more majestic than from hence. The dark lines of the mouldering palace still embosomed in a sacred grove, which "twines its roots within the imperial hearth," seem to mock and scorn, even in decay, the abode of him who stood, like a Christian Colossus, between the present and the past, bidding, by the power of his intellectual might and temporal authority,—these foul shadows, still lingering about the Roman altars, vanish into everlasting night.





THE CATACOMBS.

IF the Rome we behold, with its ruins, Temples, Palaces, Churches, gardens, villas, and Museums, be eloquently suggestive, no less so is the subterranean city—that hidden Rome—at once the Capitol and Necropolis of the Martyrs.

The upper and visible city serves as a guide to the subterranean one : let us study both ; here is ample food for the imagination and the soul, the head and the heart, the intellect and the feelings. Nor let the busy scene above withdraw us from the contemplation of those harrowing annals that lie entombed below, like choicest jewels garnered in a dingy casket. What adds infinitely to the interest of the Catacombs is, that they not only were the sepulchre of the early Christians, but served as their refuge and asylum against persecution, as well as the rallying point and centre of the primitive Church. The bones of the believers lay beside the altars on which were celebrated the mysteries of our common faith,

they came here to live, and to die, to a home, to a church, to a grave.

Fifteen consular roads parted in different directions from the *Milliarium aureum* in the Forum, and after traversing the Campagna, disappeared towards the four quarters of the globe, connecting the various portions of that vast empire that knew no certain limits. Along the borders of those fifteen Roman ways lies the subterranean city of the Catacombs, forming a labyrinthian network enclosing and embracing Rome. Each is known, each has its name, its highways, its narrow alleys, its shrines, altars, monuments, frescoes, sculptures; every cell, and nook, and tomb are marked and noted.

The reason why the Catacombs were situated without the city are various. The Roman laws did not permit of interment within the walls; a refuge too near or too public would have surely led to certain discovery, and long custom had taught all classes to bury their dead beside the great highways, of which we see so many examples in the monuments bordering the Appian Way, as well as the numerous Pagan mausoleums and *columbaria* which still remain, bordering every outlet from the city. Thus around actual visible Rome, as Christianity spread and multiplied, another city came to be formed, hidden in the bowels of the earth, with its various divisions,

names, and inhabitants of every sex and age ; its churches, its open spaces, all communicating by innumerable galleries, some low and tortuous, others large and broad, piled one above the other, often to the number of four and even five, intersecting, crossing, diverging, and uniting, only again to separate, in a thousand labyrinthian windings. These galleries, lighted by innumerable lamps of bronze or of dried earth, and with apertures here and there opening from above to renew the exhausted air, were lined with rows of narrow graves or *loculi* cut in the tufa rock, just sufficient to admit a body in a horizontal attitude, and extended at least three hundred miles round Rome, bordered by six millions of sepulchres !

Much as has been written on the subject of the Catacombs, the very origin of the name is still a subject of dispute ; these excavations being also known among the Pagans, as *latomiæ* and *arenariæ*, as well as *catacombæ*, which signifies deep pit, subterranean place, cut out in the Pozzolana rock. By whose hand and for what purpose these vast subterranean regions were originally formed, is the first question that naturally arises, and it is one, like that respecting the name, still veiled in doubt. The fact is, no certain information exists, and, therefore, any ingenious theory may be readily accepted. Many archeologists, such as Bosio, Aringhi, and Boldetti, hold that

they were opened by the Romans, while Padre Marchi, whose name and authority are so highly esteemed as connected with the subject in our own day, brings forward all his local knowledge and research, to prove that they are entirely Christian in their origin. I must be permitted to say, that I hold reasons adduced for the first conclusion to be the best supported. The Romans, according to Boldetti, soon discovered that the Campagna on which the city was situated, abounded in excellent materials for building. The mixture of tufa and sand, known as pozzolana, was therefore early made use of by them for this purpose. But not to injure or endanger the surface of the soil, they opened small and narrow exterior apertures, by means of which, descending into the lower portions of the rock, they carried on their excavations to an immense extent. The surface soil remained therefore uninjured, while the city was profusely ornamented with the product of these subterranean diggings. This laborious work was executed by the ever-useful slaves. Boldetti insists that many of these quarries existed when Christianity was introduced into Rome, and to strengthen and confirm his position, he cites the subterranean excavations still remaining under or near the cities of Naples, Syracuse, and Paris. We know, too, that Carthage had also such subterranean quarries, and

Cicero, Suetonius, and Vitruvius, describe those of Rome so particularly, as to leave little rational doubt on the subject. Cicero mentions one Asinius who was decoyed into the *arenariæ* near the Esquiline gate, and there murdered. Nero, according to Tacitus, desiring to conceal himself, was recommended to take refuge in one of the *arenariæ*, which he refused to do, because it would, he said, be burying himself alive. Vitruvius, in speaking of these excavations, terms them *arenariæ*.

Now that the Christians, persecuted, pursued, and in terror of their lives, should seek an asylum in these recesses, is highly probable. The neighbourhood of Rome could offer them no better shelter. But as well as a refuge for the living, they needed a place of sepulchre for the dead, especially for those martyrs who had suffered for the faith. The *pozzolana* was soft and easily worked, and, further, possessed the excellent quality of absorbing all damp and impurity in its porous formation; therefore, that along the narrow galleries of their subterranean hiding places they should excavate tombs for the ashes of the departed, and conceal their remains along with themselves, was perfectly natural.

That such was the case is proved by several inscriptions found in the Catacombs, as also from various passages in the acts of the different martyrs. One

passage, in particular, in the acts of the saints, Marcus and Marcellinus, is conclusive ; it expressly declares, "that they were buried on the Appian Way, two miles from Rome, at a place called *Ad Arenas*, because there were there quarries where sand was excavated to build the city wall." That these *arenariae* were ever used as burial places by the Pagans appears very doubtful ; the *Columbaria* are quite of a different form, and the very distance at which many of the *arenariae* are situated from the city would render it very unlikely that the ashes of the dead should be transported to that distance, when so many more convenient and appropriate localities existed near at hand, especially on the Esquiline. Besides, a concluding proof of the Christian origin of this subterranean Necropolis is the fact, that, amongst the thousands of inscriptions discovered, not one has been found of a date anterior to the introduction of Christianity. It seems to me, that Boldetti's arguments in proof of Christian cemeteries having been opened in Pagan *arenariae* are quite conclusive.

• That the Christians increasing in number, and suffering under the constant apprehension that these subterranean vaults, known to so many, might become unsafe, enlarged the original *arenariae* to an immense extent, opened out fresh galleries, erected new shrines, and

excavated thousands of fresh tombs or *loculi*, is quite comprehensible; therefore, in maintaining the Pagan origin of the Catacombs as *arenariæ*, I am far from supposing that they are Pagan in their entire extent. Quite the contrary; the increasing number of Christians only availed themselves of the original *arenariæ* probably as a kind of vestibule to the new constructions, which, known only to themselves, were purposely rendered as confused and intricate as possible, so as to increase their safety both as places of concealment and consecrated temples, wherein to celebrate the holiest mysteries of our faith. After Christianity had made distinguished proselytes at Rome,—which was the case after the arrival of St. Peter and St. Paul, when we read that even some of Nero's household were converted, (their gardens and villas being used as refuges, and burial places for their poorer fellow-believers)—the saints Priscilla, Cyriaca, and Lucina, are especially recorded as having opened cemeteries in grounds belonging to them; the Catacomb opened by Saint Cyriaca, once the Veran field on the road to Tibur, being distinguished by the interesting Basilica of San Lorenzo built over the opening.

And now, having made these brief remarks on the origin of the Catacombs, a few words on their general arrangement and characteristics will not be inappropriate.

That these immense excavations were executed without any preconceived plan or architectural arrangement, is most improbable. The Christian portions of the original *arenaria*, intricate as they at first sight appear, are constructed on an uniform plan which determines the interior portion of each cemetery, and connects together, as in one vast net-work, the various separate Catacombs surrounding Rome. The dimensions of the different galleries throughout are found to be nearly the same, just sufficient space being allowed for the passage of two men bearing a corpse; the rectangular position of the tombs is also universal, that being, according to the Christian rites, the proper position for the dead. The tombs themselves were not constructed according to fancy or caprice. They were invariably niches opened horizontally in the wall, broad enough to contain either one or two bodies, and were closed with a slab of marble or stone. This arrangement, repeated over a space occupying three hundred miles, supposes a regular and well-considered plan, as well as proves the exclusive appropriation of the Catacombs as burial places by the Christians, for both the Greeks and the Romans, as is well known, burnt their dead and deposited the ashes in small funereal urns. It must be clear to every one who has given any consideration to the subject, that the

Christian mode of interment was borrowed from the Jews by the early Church, the Jews being one of the few nations who preserved the bodies of the deceased, and formed sepulchres in rocks and caverns. The bodies of the martyrs were, by the pious care of Christian widows and virgins, enveloped in fine linen, sometimes in rich stuffs, and embalmed with spices and perfumes cast into the grave. "Arabia and Sabia," says Tertullian, "have sent us more aromatic spices to bury with our dead than have been sold to perfume the gods." And again Prudentius confirms this account by declaring "that the Christian manner of burying is to spread the finest and whitest linen in the tomb, upon which spices and perfumes are placed, to preserve the body." I have been tempted to dwell on this hypothesis as being a subject deeply interesting to every reader.

It is a curious reflection that during the many centuries that passed from the time that the first germ of Christianity was planted at Rome, until Constantine, enthroned in the vast Ulpian Basilica within the enclosure of Trajan's Forum, declared Christianity the religion of the world,—the primitive Church possessed no other place of sepulchre but the Catacombs. All were laid in their narrow home cut out of the tufa rock, martyrs or believers, sinners or saints, rich and poor, master and slave,

noble or plebeian. All were borne down into the tortuous labyrinths of the subterranean galleries lighted by small lamps of bronze or earthenware suspended from the vault, or placed over the grave of some especially venerated saint, and deposited in one among the thousand *loculi* yawning on either hand. If the body was that of a martyr, a small vessel, the *ampulla* filled with the blood, was placed in a little niche beside it in the wall, and a lamp was suspended near to mark the spot for general veneration.

The sepulchral walls of the galleries were broken by open spaces, *areae*, occurring at irregular distances, where the primitive Christians assembled, and by the crypts, where kneeling before the altar raised over some blessed martyr, they were nourished by the triple bread of instruction, prayer, and the holy eucharist. There were also the *cubiculae* in the upper passages, small rooms or cells, varying in size and height, sometimes furnished with a circular orifice at the top for admitting air and light. These *cubiculae* were often adorned with rude frescoes and humble ornaments, where all spoke of hope, joy, and immortality. In the Catacomb of San Ponzio a painting is preserved representing the baptism of our Lord by St. John ; the Holy Spirit descends in the form of a dove, and an angel bears in his hands the name of

Jesus, while a stag, standing at his feet, drinks the waters of the river Jordan. Symbolical figures of the Saviour, under the form of the good Shepherd, of the four rivers, of the ship, of the vine, and the fish, are frequent, but most interesting is the fact, that the earliest traditionary representations of our Lord are found here. One of the best preserved of these pictures exists in that portion of the Catacomb of San Calisto entered from the Appian Way. It is placed on the ceiling, in a large medallion surrounded by arabesques with doves. Over the left shoulder is thrown some drapery, otherwise the figure is unclothed. The face is oval, the expression serious and mild, the hair, parted on the forehead, flows in curls over the shoulders, the appearance altogether being of a man between thirty and forty years old. There is an inexpressible charm in these ancient portraits of our Lord, sanctified by the seal of tradition, and venerable from their antiquity.

These few remarks on subterranean Rome, on whose walls the annals of the primitive Church are so touchingly engraven, are intended as a preface to a short narrative of my own impression drawn up after first visiting the Catacombs.

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To-day on the Appian Way, that "*regina viarum*" so

inexhaustible in recollections, where every stone, every broken wall, has its history, each forming portions of the great mosaic, making up the chronicles of bygone centuries. I passed out of the city by the tombs of the Scipios (where the rich sarcophagus lay hid, deep buried in the gloom of the long subterranean galleries), through the triumphal arch of Drusus, backed by the loftier pile of the Porta San Sebastiano, whose twin-turretted towers, rising aloft, deepen the shadows. On I go along the walled-in road, roughly paved too, as though we were still struggling in the city; on,—perhaps for two miles. I pass a low door in the wall, overshadowed by trees waving over a ruined mass of stone, once a tomb, wreathed and garlanded with luxuriant ivy. Beside that grove and that tomb, sheltered by those dark trees, is the entrance to the Catacombs of St. Calixtus, whither I am bound, but not to enter there. I go on a little way and come to a church, which is that of San Sebastiano, standing in a piazza. There is nothing particularly venerable or ancient in its aspect, yet it strikes me with a thrill as a mysterious spot; perhaps from association, for I know that from this church I am about to descend into the Catacombs, that living book in which are written in the blood of the martyrs, or with the unready pencil of some unknown artist, the faith, the manners,

the customs, every detail of the painful, yet sublime lives of our Christian ancestors ; a book without an end, both for the Christian and the antiquarian ! The monk acting as guide not being forthcoming, I have plenty of time to look about me. The church stands on the fall of a hill, and is shaded by a grove of funereal cypresses, the only living green appropriate to the dark memories attached to it. In front there is an open space and a pillar, behind a natural wall of tufa-rock of a golden tinge, as though warmed by centuries of sunshine beating against its sides. It is woven over with cypress, ivy, weeds, and wallflowers, matted and massed together, and fringed with festoons of hawthorn just bursting into snowy wreaths of blossom, like Spring weaving garlands round the wrinkled forehead of old Time. Beyond, on the summit of another hill, stands the solid tomb of Cecilia Metella, that "stern round tower of other days," the grandest monument of the street of tombs.

I entered the church, a spacious building, handsomely decorated, but without a single claim to antiquity, although it is the last of the seven Basilicas, and was founded by Constantine. Some ill-disposed cardinal, however, stepped in about the middle of the last century, and destroyed every vestige of the past. Here is the tomb of St. Sebastian under the altar bearing his name,

where he is represented in a marble statue of some merit, lying dead, pierced with silver arrows. The statue is by Giorgetti, pupil of Bernini, and the French taste apparent may be better pardoned when it is remembered that Sebastian was a Gaul, born at Narbonne, and a soldier in the Roman armies. Opposite his altar an immense collection of relics is displayed, among which the arrows extracted from his wounds are pointed out, as well as many others which I had not time to inspect, as the monk who was to accompany me below now approached, a brown-robed, barefooted friar, more akin to death, darkness, and the tomb, than to the living. He presented me with a small lighted taper, opened a door in the nave of the church, and after descending some twelve or fifteen steps, we found ourselves in the Catacombs. A low-arched passage cut in the Pozzolana rock opened to engulf us, and in a moment, save for the feeble glimmering of the tapers, we were in utter darkness. Innumerable low galleries opened out in every possible direction, while on either hand of the passage we traversed (which just allowed of our walking without stooping), appeared range above range of lateral excavations, sufficiently large to contain a body; the graves of the old, the young, children, soldiers, popes, martyrs, rich and poor, mingling their common dust ;

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shelves, as it were, of wasting mortality. At the beginning of the Catacombs no bones were visible, they having been removed as relics into different churches. Tenantless yawned the narrow apertures which, when the last trumpet shall sound, will have nothing to render. The monk crept noiselessly on; a great silence reigned in the fathomless vaults, and a gloom, like the Egyptian darkness, *to be felt*. Not a plant, not a bird, nor smallest living animal recalls one's imagination from the absolute picture of silent, impenetrable death.

Passage after passage opened on either side, each so similarly bordered by ranges of sepulchres, that, but for the glimmer of the monk's taper preceding me, I must have instantly lost my way. I recalled all the horrid stories I had ever heard of people lost in these monumental caverns, and trembled. Once strayed all hope expires, and nothing remains but to wander on and on through damp vaults, until exhaustion, hunger, and horror overcome the fated wretch, who at length pilloved by a tomb sinks down to die. I cannot describe the wild distorted fancies, the feelings of awe and wonder that came over me as I followed the steps of the dark-robed monk through these terrible recesses. After awhile my apprehensions lessened, and I remembered with gratitude that it is to this darkness and obscurity we

owe (humanly speaking) the very existence of Christianity, preserved as it were for centuries in the bowels of the earth to reappear in the fulness of time triumphant, and be proclaimed with one voice the religion of the universe. What a picture do these dark vaults display of the devotion, the zeal, the love of those early Christian converts whose baptism was in blood! I pictured them to myself, stealing forth from the city in the gloomy twilight out towards the lonely Campagna, and disappearing one by one through well-known apertures, threading their way through the winding galleries to some altar, where light and life, and spiritual food, the soft chaunting of holy psalms, and the greeting of faithful brethren awaited them. The sight of these early haunts of the persecuted and infant religion is inexpressibly affecting, and I pity those, be they Protestant or Papist, who can visit them without overwhelming emotions. How many martyrs,—their bodies torn and lacerated by the cruel beasts, amid the roars of thousands shrieking forth the cry of *Christianos ad leonem!* in the bloody games of the Flavian amphitheatre,—have passed by here, borne by mourning friends, or compassionate widows or virgins, to their last narrow home along the very path I was now treading! How many glorified saints now singing the praises of the Eternal

around the great white throne in the seventh heaven of glory, may have been laid to rest in these very apertures lighted by the flickering taper that I held. But I must pause,—this is an endless theme, a pæan I feel utterly unworthy to sing !

I wandered on bearing my taper, close on the noiseless steps of the monk. Sometimes we descended narrow damp steps into lower stories, the walls of porous tufa still perforated with countless tombs piled closely one above another ; sometimes we ascended. In all there are four separate stories in these Catacombs, and the confusion, after wandering for a little space becomes perfectly overwhelming. Now and then we came upon a square opening, where service was performed over the grave of some especial saint, the tomb of the dead serving as the altar to the living. I could not but observe the striking similarity in these arrangements to those now existing in all the martyr churches of Rome. Antiquity at least and the example of the primitive Church are on the side of the Catholics. “The same slab,” says Prudentius, “gives the sacrament and faithfully guards the martyr’s remains ; it preserves his bones in the sepulchre in hope of the Eternal Judge, and feeds the *Tibricolæ* with sacred meat. Great is the sanctity of the place, and near at hand is the altar for those who

pray." Some of these chapels are extremely small and low, others comparatively large, but no fresco paintings are found in this portion of the Catacombs of St. Calixtus. In one spot, after descending many steps to the very lowest story of the tier of catacombs, three chapels open into each other. I remarked that in their immediate neighbourhood many ways and passages meet and intersect with tenfold confusion, but countless as are the galleries still open, the mouths of many more are closed to avoid danger. These chapels cannot fail deeply to impress the imagination as being the very *sanctum sanctorum* of the early martyrs, where they drank of that cup and tasted that immortal food which alone sustained frail mortality under the torments awaiting it. They are called "*Monumenta arcuata*," from the arch over the slab, for the celebration of the sacramental mysteries. Here, too, were held the "Agapæ," or love-feasts—not to be confounded, however, with the holier rite which Protestants accuse Papists of having subsequently permitted to degenerate into masses for the dead—to be celebrated over, or near, their mortal remains. These were the days of the humiliation of the Church, who, as if sharing the human nature of her Divine Master, was predestined to rise from the earth, and to begin her career in infinite nothingness. At this early period, according

to the "*Liber Pontificalis*," the holy utensils for the celebration of the eucharist were of glass ; and the sole property possessed by the infant Church, was given by the pious senator Pudentius, father of the holy virgins Sta. Prassede and Pudenziana, whose names as black-letter saints are deservedly honoured by the Protestant Church. The senator's estate and that of a Christian widow called Lucina, formed the nucleus of the ecclesiastical possessions.

As I penetrated with the monk deeper and deeper into this mysterious region, I could not but feel alarmed at the solitude of my situation ; my fears even prompted me to doubt his knowledge of the intricacies in which we were involved. But he soon silenced my apprehensions by his calm reply, "*Non abbia paura, Signora*. For ten years I have lived here, more below than above the ground. I know every turn, every step so well I could walk it in my sleep." "But," said I, seeing the taper flickering and waning ominously under the currents of damp air, "suppose our lights go out?" "*Non importa*," replied he ; "I could take you out safely without them." After this assurance I ceased to fear, and again abandoned myself to the strange fascination created by the consecrated gloom. The atmosphere in the Catacombs is warm and pleasant, though somewhat close. I only

perceived a feeling of damp when we descended to the fourth, or lowest story, and then but slightly. I saw many open graves, containing what once were bones, which, when exposed to the air, literally crumbled into a handful of dust ; I also saw many unopened tombs. When an inscription or other outward indication invites curiosity, and the sepulchre is opened, within is found nothing but dust, representing by its position the form of a human body ; even this faint evidence of the human form vanishes at the slightest breath or the gentlest touch ; no indication remains of the bones. Very rarely, however, a few bones remain, and sometimes a sword or some other instrument indicative of martyrdom is found. Thus did the savage nations of the north place armour in the tomb of their chief, or portions of the spoil gathered from his enemies. But the lamp, and the *ampulla*, or vessel filled with blood, are the clearest and most undeniable evidence of the martyr's resting-place.

I was particularly interested by one chapel, where that most holy man San Filippo Neri, justly called the Apostle of Rome, the founder of the Oratorians, had, during a period of ten years, constantly slept. San Carlo Borromeo, the great Milanese saint, another bright example of charity and holiness, is also said to have passed many nights in these sacred solitudes.

After threading mazy windings utterly confusing, we at last emerged at the foot of the stair leading into the church, beside the tomb of St. Sebastian, whose remains when found here were removed above. It is surmounted by an exquisite half-figure of the saint, by Bernini.— Could I impress my readers with the solemn awe, the overwhelming thoughts that visited my soul while wandering among the holy dead, my visit to the Catacombs would stand forth, as I felt it, an epoch in my life. But, alas ; perhaps from the very multitude of my emotions, I am the less able properly either to define or to describe them.





ST. PETER'S.

AT St. Peter's the whole world finds a common home. Either as religious or artistic pilgrims, we all bow before a common shrine; distinctions of country, of grade, of opinion, national prejudices, and customs are forgotten.

Catholics, be they French, English, American, or Greek—no matter what nation, naturally and spontaneously join in a universal feeling of religious citizenship within the walls of a city at once the cradle and the centre of their creed. They worship as at one altar, they unite in venerating the great western Patriarch, they recite the same prayers, they commemorate the same awful sacrifice.

St. Peter's is the material and palpable expression of religious power, fixed, immutable, supreme. The waves may beat, the thunders roll, the storm may rage, nay, destruction may advance even to the very threshold, but

those marble walls stand sure, for they are founded on a rock—the rock of Christianity. Time and chance, custom and superstition, may have overcharged them with much that is extraneous, but their foundation is divine; it rests on the great corner-stone of our salvation, and it is written that the hand of man shall not prevail against it.

If there is one spot on the wide surface of this vast globe where all enmities ought to be forgotten, it is the threshold of St. Peter's, the common object of yearly pilgrimage to thousands of all nations, coming hither from the uttermost corners of the earth, in every century. Books, painting, language, poetry, and learning, have been exhausted to do honour to this Basilica—the regal diadem, still glittering on the mouldering brow of the fallen Queen of Cities; yet what pen, what pencil ever has, or ever can, do justice to that “vast and wondrous dome, to which Diana's marvel was a cell.” Even the cold sarcastic Gibbon warms into enthusiasm when he designates St. Peter's as “the most glorious Temple ever raised to religion.”

I desire to dedicate a few pages to the consideration of this magnificent symbol of the great Western Church. In connection with its historical associations, much may be collected of special interest, for, as Voltaire says,

speaking of another subject, "Beaucoup en ont parlé, mais peu l'ont connu."

In classic days, the quarter lying beyond the Tiber, now called the Vatican, formed a portion of those fertile Quintilian meadows, cultivated by the hand of Cincinnatus, where the lictors sent by the Senate found him labouring when called on to lead the Roman Legions. Tacitus speaks of the Vatican as a vile and infamous quarter (*infamibus Vaticanis locis*). Even as late as the reign of Vitellius, the soldiers quartered in that neighbourhood contracted diseases and epidemic distempers. In earlier times it was avoided by the Pagans, on account of the horrible serpents that infested the rocks and pools in the valley. To the early Christians the spot was execrable, by reason of the abominable rites and foul superstitions practised at the Temples of the Bona Dea and of Apollo. The hills surrounding the Vatican were partly laid out in gardens belonging to Agrippina, daughter of Agrippa and Julia and granddaughter of Augustus. Caligula first built in the valley where now stands the Basilica. He erected a circus to which a spacious portico was attached. Here Claudius his successor, Suetonius tells us, exhibited the games of the Circus, as well as combats of wild beasts and gladiators.

Domitia, the aunt of Nero, also owned a portion of

the ground laid out in gardens. The possession cost her dear, for Nero, who frequently inhabited this part of Rome, looked with longing eyes on his aunt's garden, and condemned her to death, in order to become her heir.

In the early part of his reign, all this portion of the city lying beyond the Tiber, became infamous as the scene of his profligate pleasures. The Milvian Bridge, according to Tacitus, was his favourite rendezvous for midnight revelry, and at the Vatican the Emperor first exhibited his charioteering talent in public, causing a wide space to be enclosed in the valley as an Arena, where he invited the attendance of the multitude, and gratified their passion for public diversions. This Arena, added to the buildings already constructed by Caligula, became the nucleus of the vast palace and edifices that occupied the very site of St. Peter's, and it was here that Nero committed many of the most revolting cruelties on the Christians; "men," says Suetonius in Nero's life, "infected by a new and malignant superstition," a designation of them in which the historian evidently coincides, classing them with charioteers, actors, and vagabonds, in enumerating the lower classes which the Emperor intended to reform. When Rome was set on fire, either in a mad frolic of Nero's, or by accident, the deed, as is

well known, was ascribed to the Christians ; "a race of men," according to Tacitus, "detested for their evil practices." Nero found it convenient to ascribe an unpopular and odious act, generally believed to have been committed at his own instigation, to an obscure sect just rising into notice. A set of abandoned wretches were suborned to declare them guilty, and on this evidence the Christians were condemned for having fired the city, "out of sullen hatred to the whole human race." One may plainly perceive by this accusation that the Christians were confounded with the Jews, whose stern prejudices and strange aversion to all foreigners made them generally detested.

The Christians, convicted by false witnesses, were put to death with exquisite tortures, and to their sufferings Nero added mockery and derision. "Some were covered with the skins of wild beasts, and left to be devoured by dogs, others were nailed to a cross, numbers were burnt alive, and many, covered with inflammable matter, were lighted up, when the day declined, to serve as torches during the night." Juvenal, as well as Tacitus, describes these barbarities with horror. For the convenience of witnessing this tragic spectacle, Nero lent his own gardens. He added the sports of the Circus, and assisted in person, sometimes driving a chariot, and

occasionally mixing with the rabble in the dress of a charioteer. The midnight horrors of that amphitheatre in the valley of the Vatican, illuminated with the blazing bodies of the Christian martyrs, who can tell?

According to some authorities, St. Peter was crucified here, but the more generally received tradition records that the great Apostle suffered on the neighbouring heights of the Janiculum, where the Church of San Pietro in Montorio is erected. The obelisk standing in the centre of the Piazza of St. Peter's, beside the glorious fountains, once adorned the *Spina* of Nero's amphitheatre. How often has this curious remnant of Pagan ages, first placed in that position by Caligula, beheld Nero, habited as a charioteer, drive madly round the piazza, which is now encircled by the matchless colonnade. The obelisk is now surmounted by a cross, and was placed on its present site by Sixtus V.

This valley, these stones, the surrounding heights stained with holy blood, the very Circus where the impious Nero imagined he had crushed Christianity in its cradle, was decreed by the inscrutable providence of God to be the spot where the grandest and most august Temple man ever conceived should rise in his honour. On the soil where the serpent crawled, where

Nero's mad persecution commenced, the Mosaic prophecy is literally fulfilled, and "the woman's seed bruises the serpent's head."

Many of the martyrs sacrificed by the rage of Nero were, by the tender care of Christian widows and holy virgins, interred in the neighbouring caves and grottoes, near the imperial gardens and circus. Tradition points out this locality as the sepulchre of St. Peter. Within these grottoes, at once the tomb, the asylum, and the cradle of primitive Christianity, Pope Anacletus successor of St. Peter, erected a small oratory, where the tears, the groans, and the prayers of the early saints and confessors, during the course of the many horrible persecutions that rent the Church, were poured out, beside a lowly altar, hid in the deep gloom of subterranean caves.

These subterranean tombs and asylums are evidently customs borrowed from the East. The Bible, as well as the accounts of Eastern travellers, shows us, that this mode of sepulchre is general there. When our Lord died, Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Pilate, "and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock." Now the first missionaries of Christianity, St. Peter and St. Paul and their followers, being Jews, would naturally desire to be interred according to the manner of their

nation, while the knowledge that their Lord was laid in the living rock, would further endear and consecrate the custom to every primitive Christian. Hence these early graves, the nucleus of the countless catacombs encircling Rome.

When, at the accession of Constantine,—who is said to have beheld the vision of the glorious cross in the heavens, from the heights over the Vatican, the modern Monte Mario,—peace was restored to earth, and the Church finally triumphed over Paganism, the primitive oratory of Pope Anacletus was transformed into a Basilica, more worthy of the sacred traditions associated with it.

On the day fixed for laying the foundation, Constantine repaired to the Vatican, and divesting himself of his imperial diadem and purple robe, spade in hand opened the ground, and bore away twelve baskets full of earth, in honour of the twelve apostles. “Was it not just,” asks a great modern divine and historian, “that the hands of the Cæsars, once defiled by the service of idols, should be sanctified by labouring at the erection of the house of the true God?”

On this occasion, says the same authority, the body of St. Peter was raised from the tomb where it had lain concealed, and being placed in a case of sculptured

silver, was deposited at the foot of the altar. Constantine, and his mother Helena, were prodigal in their donations to the new Basilica, which was consecrated by Pope Sylvester, A.D. 324. In this state it remained until the accession of Nicholas V., a Pontiff who so richly compensated for the obscurity of his birth by his elevated sentiments and noble intellect. He first conceived the idea of restoring Rome to at least some portion of her ancient splendour, and, as a commencement, naturally turned his thoughts towards the ancient shrine, honoured by all Catholics, as the tomb of the Apostle to whom were intrusted the spiritual keys.

In order to execute the splendid temple he meditated, the celebrated architect Alberti was called to Rome, and the plan of the new Basilica settled. Before the tribune was finished, Nicholas expired. Three centuries were fated to elapse ere the mighty work was entirely completed. After an interval of fifty years, the warlike Pontiff Julius II., induced by personal vanity, imagined for himself a gorgeous monument intended to become the admiration of future ages, to be placed within the new Temple. The continuation of the building he confided to Bramante, the kinsman of Raphael, while his own monument was to be executed by Michael Angelo.

Again fresh foundations were laid, but the death of the great architect Bramante, and subsequently that of the Pope, suspended the works. Leo X., not less anxious than his predecessor to execute a design, conceived by the two greatest architects that ever lived, intrusted its execution to Sangallo, Fra Giocondo, and Raphael. But untimely death carried them all off also ere much progress had been made. Many different architects were called in, but nothing memorable was achieved until Paul III. confided the works to Michael Angelo, who "built," as the Romans say, "in the air, what Agrippa constructed on the earth;" the dome of the Pantheon being only two feet smaller in diameter than that of St. Peter's, which is raised 300 feet from the ground. Under Michael Angelo's direction the body of the edifice was finished. Vignola and Giacomo della Porta succeeded him, but the stupendous dome was not yet completed. Sixtus V. intrusted its execution, as well as that of the lantern, to Fontana. Then came a fatal blunder, for Paul V. (highly venerating some particular portion of the ancient church) would not allow it to be removed. Other considerations were not wanting, and overcome by foolish scruples and persuasions, the Pontiff was induced to decide on the design of Carlo Maderno in preference to the original plan of Michael

Angelo, and to substitute a Latin for a Greek cross, as before proposed. The want of harmony in the whole design, and the unconsciousness of its overwhelming size, that strange optical delusion which causes an immense edifice to appear infinitely smaller than it really is, were the consequences of this change. Those who esteem that peculiarity a merit, must be totally ignorant of the proper effect which architecture ought to produce; it is a great and fundamental error, never contemplated by the great Michael Angelo in his original design. Not even the size of the angels supporting the marble shells containing holy water, standing on either hand of the great entrance, which are six feet high, and yet only appear of the ordinary proportion of monumental cherubs, can dissipate this impression. I am confident that no person ever entered St. Peter's for *the first time*, without being confounded and disappointed at the comparative smallness of its apparent proportions. Its mighty bulk is only perceptible after an examination of the various colossal details; at first sight the interior appears considerably less than our own St. Paul's. The magnificent vestibule is perhaps the only portion of the edifice fully answering to one's high-wrought expectations.

And now, standing upon that sacred threshold *ad limina Apostolorum*, let us pause a moment and recall the wondrous procession of pilgrims who, like a chain of gold unfolding before our eyes and linking us to far-off centuries, have passed through this portal. I never enter the hallowed space without calling to mind the emperors, the kings, the pontiffs, the saints, and the great doctors, pillars of the Church, who, coming from the East, and from the West, to honour the tomb of Peter, that pilot of the Galilean Lake, passed by where I tread.

At the head of this stately company, whose dim shadows still seem to haunt the ancient shrine they loved so well, appears Constantine the Great the conqueror of Maxentius, who, while lying encamped upon Monte Mario, beheld that glorious vision of the illuminated cross, "in which sign he conquered." Theodosius comes next, that powerful sovereign, who so meekly submitted to the penance inflicted on him by St. Ambrose for the barbarities he had caused to be committed at Thessalonica,—lying before the altar in Milan Cathedral, in dust and ashes. Theodosius came to Rome before undertaking a war against Eugenius, and offered up prayers at St. Peter's for a speedy victory. Valentinian, the Eastern Emperor, came also,

with his wife Eudoxia, and his mother Galla Placidia; and Belisarius, Justinian's great general, the conqueror of the Barbarians, the hero of Rome, laid his laurels on the hallowed altar. Towering above the rest appears a gigantic form, with a countenance both terrible and stern. It is the fierce Totila, before whom all nations shrink, for his footsteps tread in blood. But, see this ravager of nations, this remorseless conqueror beside the Apostle's tomb is gentle and subdued! Another crowned head of a barbarian king is there, Cedwalla, king of the West Saxons, who leaving his far-off island-kingdom, approaches as a humble catechumen, to receive baptism within the walls of the ancient Basilica. Nor is this the only royal pilgrim from our own infant isles, Cendred, king of the Murcians, came to Rome, and divesting himself of his regal garments beside the Apostle's tomb, became a monk in a neighbouring monastery.

But what an endless procession unfolds before me; to name one half is impossible! Luitprand, king of the Lombards, Ina king of the West Saxons, Carloman of France, Richard of England, Bertrade the wife of Pepin and mother of Charlemagne, and Offa the Saxon, who, in an excess of zeal, made his kingdom tributary to St. Peter; also the most powerful German Emperors, the Othos, the

Henries, with their wives and sons, all came on the same pious pilgrimage.

Pre-eminent among these sovereigns, advances one of a tall and stately presence,—it is Charlemagne, the restorer of the Roman Empire and the favourite of the Church. Four times did this warrior king visit St. Peter's—on the last occasion, in the year 800, receiving the crown from the hands of Leo III., humbly kneeling beside the altar, while the Romans shouted forth pæans of rejoicing, as at an ancient triumph. One of his successors, Lothaire, also accepted the crown from Pascal I. Our own Alfred was crowned on the same spot, passing along the same ground on which we tread, and many other princes, German and French, too numerous to mention, also journeyed to Rome for the same purpose.

So universal was the veneration with which the old Basilica was regarded, that even the savage Alaric, the conqueror and the spoiler of Rome, trembled to approach St. Peter's, and, though burning and devastating so many other temples, palaces, and monuments, by a remarkable exception spared its walls, and left unmolested those fugitives who had taken refuge there.

We, of the nineteenth century, may forget that on this

spot the blood of martyrs was poured out like water, that within the hollows of those low rocky banks around St. Peter's, their bones were interred ; but the mediæval Barbarians, enemies, schismatics—conquerors though they were—remembered and trembled.

At either extremity of the truly palatial hall that precedes the entrance, the Church has recorded two of its great political benefactors—Constantine and Charlemagne, both superbly throned in niches opposite each other ; one recalling the final victory of Christianity over Paganism, the other the establishment of the Church's temporal dominion over Europe. I say nothing of the execution of the statues embodying these events, because the less said on that subject the better ; the idea and the position are alone grand, the statues themselves being in the worst possible taste, rampant specimens of the fluttering Bernini school. On the great bronze doors opening into the central nave, are sculptured the martyrdom of St. Peter, and the principal events connected with the Council of Florence, where the union of the Greek and Latin Churches was for a time accomplished. Opposite, over the entrance, is the celebrated *Navicella* by Giotto, so ill placed and ill seen that some special reason seems necessary to explain it. The reason is this. For many generations, the superstitious Pagan

converts to Christianity continued to observe the heathen custom of venerating the sun before entering the church. In order to present them with a Christian object of homage, this beautiful mosaic occupied in the old Basilica the same position in which it is now placed. It is further related, that the learned Cardinal Baronius never failed a single day during the space of thirty years to bow before this symbol of the primitive Church, here represented as tossed on the stormy sea of persecution, repeating to himself this prayer,—“Lord save me from the waves of sin, as thou didst save Peter from the waves of the sea.”

There is much less to admire in the interior decorations of St. Peter's than might be expected. The absence of painting, and the substitution of mosaic, which however well executed cannot aspire to originality of conception, or harmony of surface, and has always a glazed look,—leaves much to be desired. The celebrated *Pietà*, by Michael Angelo, to the right on entering, never excited my enthusiasm; the column of iron beside it, is, according to tradition, one of the twelve pillars of the Temple of Jerusalem, placed here by Constantine. The general character of the monuments is of that objectionable flimsy taste so cordially to be abominated, weak and mannered imitations of a school, essentially insipid

and emasculate. If there be a *Cerchio* in the *Inferno* especially devoted to peccant artists, Bernini ought to suffer unutterable torments for all the evil his naturally fine genius was the means of accomplishing. He alone is answerable for many of the marble caricatures that disfigure the aisles of St. Peter's.

The monument of Pius VII., by Thorwaldsen, is a weak composition feebly executed, and utterly unworthy of the genius of so great a sculptor. Pius looks more like an old woman than the heroic and virtuous Pontiff, whom even the thunders of the modern Jupiter Tonans inhabiting the Tuileries failed to intimidate. The monument to the Stuart family struck me as being altogether the worst specimen of Canova's art I had ever seen. There seems to be an absolute fatality about these great artists' efforts for the decoration of St. Peter's. The present baptismal font once served as the cover to the sarcophagus of Otho II., a painful association, as connected with the hopeful purity of the sacred rite.

I must confess, that the impression first conveyed to my mind by the bronze statue of St. Peter, was most repulsive; but one gradually learns at Rome, to look from the type to the anti-type, and to honour an idea, the execution of which may be extremely

defective. A great Catholic authority denies that this is a statue of Jupiter Capitolinus; according to his account, Leo the Great, after the Apostle's miraculous interposition in preventing the entrance of Attila into Rome, melted the bronze of a statue of Jupiter, in order out of the material to form an image of the Apostle.

The magnificent *baldacchino* of gilt bronze surmounting the high altar, cast from the bronze that once adorned the roof of the Pantheon, appears to the unaccustomed eye only of the ordinary altitude. One hears with astonishment, that those gold encircled pillars are higher than the lofty Farnese Palace, whose broad roof, supported by its elaborate cornice as seen from the Tiber, towers above the architectural monuments around. Mass can only be celebrated at the high altar by the Pontiff himself; and so great is the reverence with which the confessional beneath is regarded, that all, be they kings, princes, or emperors, nay, even the Pope himself, are commanded to bow before it. The cupola, that truly sublime inspiration of Michael Angelo, rises, like a sculptured poem, above. Upon its vast side, 300 feet in height and 130 feet in diameter, all the magnificence of a church, at once catholic and triumphant, is accumulated. It blazes like a dazzling firmament, sown with

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sculpture, mosaic, and carving, gorgeous with colours, and glittering like a rainbow, as the rich gleams of a southern sun come streaming down. Upon this mimic hemisphere are imaged the hierarchs and saints, beside that mother-maid, "our tainted nature's solitary boast."

- Above sit enthroned the awful Trinity, beholding as it were the nations and languages, principalities and powers, passing to and fro on the marble floors below,—while without, towering over all, piercing the blue Italian skies, the cross appears in snowy purity, ruling the infinite !

"Stranger," says a famous Catholic authority, writing of St. Peter's, "you, who are unhappy enough to approach the august shrine of the glorious Apostle, with a soul defiled with impious doubt, and you pilgrims of empty science, inspired with vain curiosity, all that now remains for you is to retire. All the external beauties of this superb edifice have passed before you as a brilliant panorama ; you have admired them with more or less intelligence, criticised them with more or less sincerity and knowledge.

"But the interior beauty of the house of God is shrouded from your eyes, the poetic symbolism of this vast monument is beyond your comprehension, for the

supernatural world of celestial beings inhabiting these sacred shrines are veiled from your eyes, a fitting understanding of these mysteries being *alone* reserved for the pious Catholic."

Warned by this exordium, I conclude.

THE END.

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